ENTERTAINMENT / A2-4

40 years ago Beatles played 2 historic concerts in Manila

SPORTS / A21

Italy makes host Germany weep with 2 late goals

METRO / A17

Philippine Normal school to seek Congress probe on hiring of new president

NEWS / A8

Jamby says she acted for Senate

PAF after 59 years: Mostly air, little force

PALIPAD NA LANG KAYONG SARANGGOLA

By Nikko Dizon

FIFTY-NINE YEARS OLD and it's all but grounded. As it celebrated its 59th anniversary yesterday, the Philippine Air Force (PAF)

PAF AFTER/ A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
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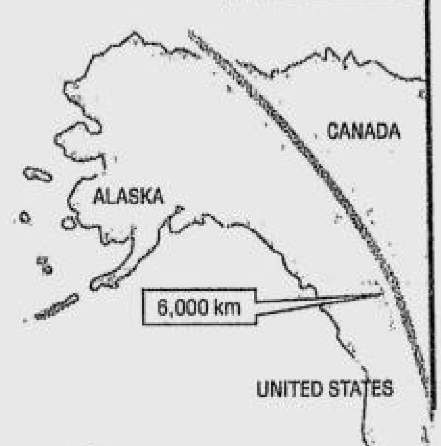
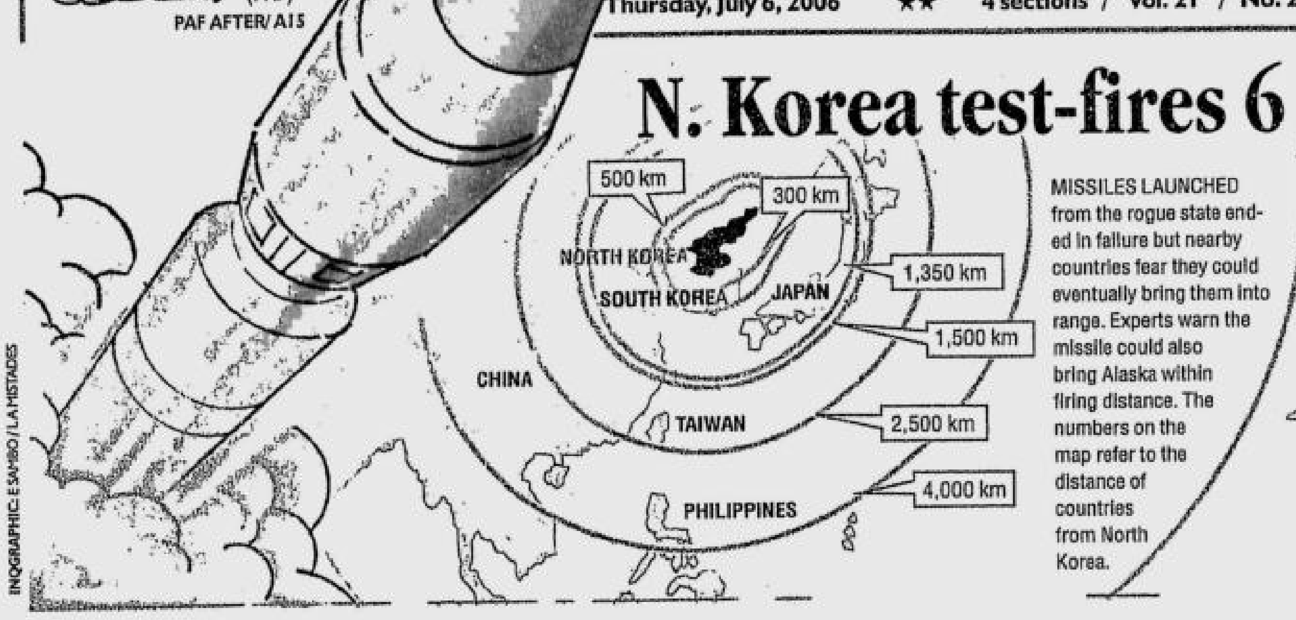


N. Korea test-fires 6 missiles, sparks outrage



MISSILES LAUNCHED from the rogue state ended in failure but nearby countries fear they could eventually bring them into range. Experts warn the missile could also bring Alaska within firing distance. The numbers on the map refer to the distance of countries from North Korea.

SEOUL—NORTH KOREA TEST-launched six missiles, including a long-range Taepodong, in an early morning barrage on Wednesday, defying stern international warnings of retaliation and prompting concerns that it could follow with more tests.

The missiles apparently fell harmlessly into the Sea of Japan, and US officials said the long-range Taepodong-2 failed shortly after takeoff, calling into question the technological capability of North Korea's feared ballistic missile program. Pyongyang last fired a long-range missile in 1998.

Even so, the audacious military exercise drew immediate attention and condemnation. The North American Aerospace Defense Command monitored the launches as they progressed but soon determined they were not a threat to the United States, a spokesperson said.

Two US state department officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the long-range missile was the Taepodong-2, North Korea's most advanced missile with a range of up to 15,000 km. Some experts believe it

N. KOREA/ A15

Lim backers dared: Come out, be proud

Señeres: What we did was patriotic, not illegal

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

WITH PRIDE, FORMER AMBASSADOR ROY SEÑERES HAS acknowledged he encouraged Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo in February and challenged others involved in the alleged move to oust her to come out publicly.

"I admit it," Señeres said in an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER following the broadcast over ANC television on Monday night of a video showing Lim, the commander of the First Scout Ranger Regiment, disavowing allegiance to the President.

"There's nothing illegal, nothing immoral in what they did. You can't do anything wrong if you're fighting evil," he went on.

Señeres said he felt bad that Lim had been left on his own. "I'm fed up, considering what he did is not illegal," he said.

"I was one of those who encouraged Lim to withdraw support. I personally saw him and other officers of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) in the middle of last year," said Señeres, 59.

Reached by the INQUIRER yesterday, the 50-year-old Lim declined immediate comment.

Señeres ticked off the names of some of those from the private sector he claimed were involved in the Feb. 24 plot: former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos, former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, ABC-5 chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, construction mogul F.F. Cruz Jr. and old-rich scion Iñigo Zobel.

"The reason I'm naming names is they should come out in the open and admit

LIM BACKERS/ A6

Civilian leaders stopped soldiers from attacking

By Tony S. Bergonia

CIVILIAN LEADERS IN THE PLOT TO oust President Macapagal-Arroyo prevailed upon rebellious soldiers to drop plans to assault Malacañang in February and prevented an outbreak of violence.

Sources, both from the civilian and military factions that wanted Ms Arroyo removed from power, said the attack on Malacañang was the first step that rebel soldiers and officers had planned to take.

Assaults were planned first on Feb. 13 and then again on Feb. 19 but both were aborted, said the sources, some of them aides of politicians who were privy to the plot.

Another strike on the Palace was planned for Feb. 24, but by that time, Malacañang had gotten wind of it, prompting the President to declare a national state of emergency and preventing what it said was a leftist and rightist conspiracy to seize power.

CIVILIAN/ A6

THREE GENERATIONS AT THE PALACE. President Arroyo's eldest son, Rep. Mikey Arroyo and his year-old daughter Monique wait for the arrival of his mother who's to preside over the awarding rites for the country's outstanding policemen on Wednesday.

GMA not in the mood to talk peace with Reds

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION WILL pursue a "legal and military offensive" against communist rebels, but it could still resume peace talks, Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared not to be in a talking mood, ordering the military and police forces at the swearing in of a new Philippine National Police chief to "end this revolutionary taxation" by dismantling the rebels' network in rural areas.

Dureza expressed surprise at the rebels' fresh call for the resumption of talks, saying the government would have to meet and draw up plans to respond to the peace overtures.

He said he informed Norway that the Philippine government was on a legal and military offensive against the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"As facilitators, they respect the position we are taking," Dureza told journalists after returning from a trip to Oslo where he briefed Norwegian officials on the status of the peace talks.

He said he had not met with any representative from the rebel group in Oslo, where he attended a forum discussing

GMA NOT/ A4

'All-out war means more loose guns'

By Norman Bordadora

GROUPS SEEKING STRICTER GUN CONtrol in the country warn against more guns and ammunition finding their way into the country's loose firearms market as the government steps up its campaign against communist rebels.

With an additional funding of P1 billion, the military and police are expected to stockpile more guns and ammunition in an effort to crush the New People's Army, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, in two years.

Amnesty International (AI) and fellow members of the Philippine Action Network on Small Arms (Philansa) said areas involved in civil war or those in transition

ALL-OUT WAR/ A4

Video boosts Palace to use Marcos powers, if needed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM'S VIDEO HAS emboldened President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration to go after coup plotters and given it confidence to use powers the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos exercised if warranted, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Ermita said in an interview with the INQUIRER that Ms Arroyo's proclamation of a state of national emergency on Feb. 24 was just the first stage of the "government's graduated exercise of its powers."

He said the video showing the commander of the First Scout Ranger Regiment declaring withdrawal of support from the President justified her issuance of Proclamation No. 1017 to crush what she then said was a leftist and rightist conspiracy to oust her.

"It really emboldened us. We are more confident of declaring (another state of emergency) when the situation on the

VIDEO BOOSTS/ A4

Life is sweeter for sugar farmers

ENRIQUE MAGALONA, NEGROS OCCIDental—Regina Martin knew next to nothing about farming when her father handed her the family estate in the 1980s, as prices tanked and insurgents threatened to turn the Philippines' sugar bowl red with blood.

"My elder brothers each had their turns but they were just overwhelmed," the mother of three and former student activist told Agence France-Presse. "They went back to live in Manila." It was a time of death on Negros island. Under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, big landowners surrendered their plantations to the government, which parceled them out to farm hands whose children were starving.

Impoverished farm workers also made fertile ground for communist New People's Army guerrillas after the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos drove many planters to ruin by imposing a government monopoly on sugar trading.

The Marcos regime fell in 1986, but output plunged further. By 1995 the

LIFE IS SWEETER/ A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon and Western Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: KATE V. PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/07/05/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

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Senior discounts are tax-credit—SC

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE 20-PERCENT DISCOUNT THAT DRUG stores give to senior citizens are considered as tax credit and may be deducted from their tax liabilities, the Supreme Court has ruled in two similar cases.

In one case, the Supreme Court ruled that as per the Senior Citizens Act, the 20 percent discount that private companies extend to senior citizens buying medicine could be deducted from their tax liabilities.

It also said that the tax credit arising from the discount could be carried over to the next taxable year.

The Supreme Court issued the ruling as it reinstated an earlier resolution of the Court of Tax Appeals directing the issuance of tax credit certificates in favor of Bicolandia Drug Corporation, a franchise of Mercury Drug.

The second Supreme Court ruling that stated that the 20 percent discount to senior citizens could be considered tax credit concerned the Commission of Internal Revenue and the Central Luzon Drug Corporation.

The Central Luzon Drug Corporation had put in a claim for a tax credit certificate equal to the amount of the 20 percent discount that it had extended to senior citizens who had purchased medicine.

The Supreme Court granted its claim, stating in the said decision that the said discount is a tax credit and not a deduction from the gross sales of the establishment.

However, the tribunal denied Bicolandia's request for a tax refund. Bicolandia sought a refund of the amount of income tax it allegedly overpaid in 1993 and 1994 as a result of treating the 20 percent sales discount as a tax deduction rather than as a tax credit.

Masinloc bidder given 30 days more to pay up

By Michelle V. Remo

ONE LAST CHANCE.

After forfeiting its $14 million performance bond five days ago, the government extended for the third time the deadline for YNN Pacific Consortium to remit the $227.54 million required down payment for the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, chair of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), gave YNN Pacific and its partner until the end of July, or another 30 days, to deliver the downpayment.

Teves said the 30-day period was a reasonable time frame for YNN to deliver the payment.

The YNN consortium submitted the $561.7 million winning bid for the power plant in December 2004. Under the bidding rules, YNN must pay 40 percent of its winning bid.

Rebidding

But Teves said that if YNN and partner Ranhill Power Berhad still failed to pay the amount by the end of July this year, then the PSALM board would have to discuss moves to rebid the country's largest coal-fired plant.

On Friday, PSALM forfeited the $14 million performance bond of YNN after it failed to meet the June 30 deadline to pay the $227.54 million downpayment. The June 30 deadline was actually already an extension of the original deadline of March 31, 2006.

He said the fact that the government forfeited the amount of performance bond no longer put it in a disadvantage despite the delayed, and possibly failed delivery of the required downpayment.

Teves said the PSALM board would have to study applicable rules to determine whether YNN would still be allowed to join the rebidding of the Masinloc plant, if there would be one.

But he said that given the questionable financial capacity of YNN, it might not be prudent to allow the consortium to join the bidding again.

First extension

The PSALM board had agreed to the first extension on condition that the performance bond be raised from $11 million to $14 million.

"The PSALM board will continue making decisions based on its primary concern-ensuring that the Filipino public has ready access to power and energy at the lowest possible prices," Teves said.

First Generation Holdings which submitted a bid of $274.85 million for the power plant in the December 2004 bidding lost to YNN.

But YNN's winning bid became a subject of congressional inquiry because of rumors that YNN was not financially stable and due to suspicion that the public bidding was not above-board.

Finance officials, however, stressed that the government had to declare YNN as the winning bidder because it submitted the highest bid. Despite its problems with YNN, the government remains highly optimistic of auctioning off five major power plants of the National Power Corp. this year.

Moving ahead

"The government's restructuring and privatization program for the power industry will not be hindered because we're moving ahead with the bidding for the assets of Napocor scheduled this year," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

Ermita was unfazed by the botched Masinloc auction considering that it made PSALM, the state agency tasked to oversee the sale of Napocor's assets, $14.14 million richer with the forfeiture of YNN's bond after it failed to meet the June 30 deadline to pay 40 percent of its winning bid.

"As our recent experience with Masinloc has shown, the necessary measures to ensure that the government's interest is fully protected are in place," said Ermita.

The government must wait for favorable conditions before attempting to sell Masinloc again, he said.

Ermita said other power assets of Napocor to be sold this year include the 100-MW Pantabangan hydroelectric plant, the 12-MW Masiway hydroelectric plant, the 275-MW Tiwi geothermal plant, the 425-MW Makban geothermal plant, and the 360-MW Magat hydroelectric plant.

Ermita said interested bidders have until the middle of this month to submit applications to take part in the public auction for the 25-year concession to run the country's power transmission assets.

With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.

STOP THE IMPEACHMENT!

(Highlights of Resolution No. 2006-030 unanimously approved by the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), the umbrella organization of all local government leagues, composed of governors, vice governors, board members, mayors, vice mayors, councilors, barangay and SK officials and appointive LGU officials and employees representing 1.7 million members, on July 3, 2006 during its 45th National Executive Board Meeting at the Century Park Hotel, Manila.)

The political opposition is at it again!

It has recycled the old, unsubstantiated charges against President Arroyo—and filed a series of impeachment complaints against her.

Because the charges are recycled and unsubstantiated—and show no compelling reason to give them due course—they have no chance to prosper at all. Just like last year's first impeachment complaint against the President, the new complaints will be decisively beaten. This is as clear as day. The nation's thoughtful leaders see them as promoting only the "personal agenda" of certain politicians.

Support for the complaints has fallen even among opposition lawmakers, according to published news reports: 26 votes at the most—far below the 78 needed to impeach—and just half the original number of opposition solons that supported the first impeachment complaint last year.

So why plunge the country in turmoil—when the patriotic course of action is *to move forward by sustaining economic growth and bringing the fruits of development to our people?*

The Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), realizing that the new impeachment complaints would harm the nation at this time, calls on the opposition to show wisdom and temperance, and to play its role as fiscalizer responsibly, and with the nation's interest at heart.

Let the national interest prevail—not the personal ambitions of a few.

Filipinos want to move on

Let us be guided by what majority of our people want (as shown by the March 8-14 survey of the Social Weather Stations (SWS):

- *Majority of Filipinos (51 percent)* wants to put behind the outcome of the 2004 presidential elections because "it is time to move on and let the President focus on the real problems of the nation."
- *A bigger majority (58 percent)* wants the opposition to "start helping (President Arroyo) to improve the country and stop too much politics."

It is clear the new impeachment complaints are geared towards bad publicity. They are for igniting a new round of partisanship.

The Filipino people don't deserve any of these

The Filipino people would be the losers in this opposition scenario.

It would wipe out the gains made by President Arroyo in her recent European trip *(foreign investments worth $380 million or over P20 billion, and over 100,000 overseas jobs for Filipinos from our Italian and Spanish partners).*

It would set back the government's reform agenda to sustain rapid economic growth, create more jobs and raise personal income, make the Philippines competitive globally, and defeat decades of poverty.

All over Asia—and the rest of the world—even the younger, smaller nations are passing us by. They are busy building the future for their people and making competitive gains in the world economy.

In the Philippines, certain sectors want to burn our house down.

Therefore, the ULAP, as the representative of 79 provinces, 117 cities, 1,501 municipalities, and 42,000 barangays, calls on the opposition in a formal resolution approved by the ULAP National Executive Board to **STOP THE IMPEACHMENT!**

ULAP fully supports PGMA

ULAP further calls on our people to rally behind President Arroyo and her government.

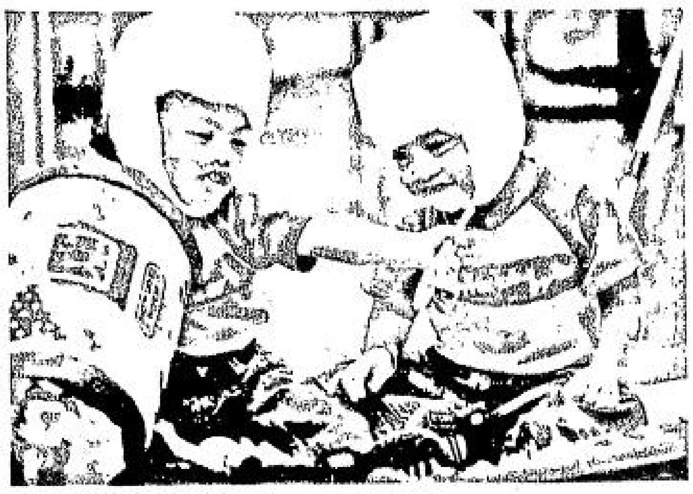
ULAP finally reaffirms its unequivocal support for President Arroyo to enable her to finish her term in 2010 and complete her reform agenda to fight poverty, create jobs, build roads and bridges, bring electricity and clean water to the poor and make the country competitive in Asia and the world.

We want reform—not political intrigue!
We want progress—not political turmoil!
We want to build the future of our nation—not to destroy it.

Done this 3rd day of July, 2006, in Manila.

Signed: **Gov. Erico B. Aumentado,** *National President;* **Mayor Ramon N. Guico, Jr.** *Executive Vice President;* **Vice Mayor Luis I. Bustamante,** *VP for Luzon;* **Mayor Geronimo Buenaventura P. Treñas,** *VP for Visayas;* **BM James Marty Lao Lim,** *Treasurer;* **Vice Gov. Julius Herrera,** *President, Vice Governors League;* **Coun. Elmer Datuin,** *Chairman, Phil. Councilors League;* **BM Vincent H. Piccio III,** *President, Board Members League;* **Mayor Jose Atienza,** *President, Metro Manila Mayors League;* **Vice Mayor Jessie Cruz,** *President, Vice Mayors League;* **BM Alan D. Zulueta,** *VP for Mindanao;* **Vice Gov. James Calisin,** *Press Relations Officer;* **Coun. Carlo Pontico Fortuna,** *Secretary General;* **Coun. Julian Coseteng,** *Asst. Secretary General;* **BM Shierly Aala,** *Auditor;* Comm. **Milton Isagani G. Mendador,** *Asst. Treasurer.* **Cecilia Banca Santos,** *President, League of Nurses,* **Frances Prescilla Cuevas,** *President, League of Govt. Midwives.*

ADVT



CARL AND CLARENCE: One more surgery

New skull surgery for Aguirre twins

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE 4-YEAR-old Aguirre twins of Silay City, Negros Occidental, who were once conjoined at the heads, will undergo skull reconstructive surgery in August, two years after they were successfully separated in New York.

Dr. Ceres Gay, whose appeal for help brought worldwide attention to the plight of the then one-a-half-year-old twins that led to their successful separation in 2004, made the announcement yesterday.

She said she was informed by Dr. James Goodrich, director of pediatric neurosurgery at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM) in New York of the planned skull reconstructive surgery in two phases in August.

The skull reconstructive surgery is needed to protect the scalps of the boys following their separation, Gay said.

Twins Carl and Clarence, accompanied by their single mother, Arlene, arrived in New York Sept. 10, 2003 and have been cared for by medical teams at CHAM and at the Blythedale Children's Hospital for free.

Four procedures took place over the course of 10 months. The final separation procedure took place during approximately 17 hours of surgery on Aug. 4, 2004.

Goodrich, in an email message to Gay, said: "The boys are doing well, amazing to see them develop along. Both are up and running about though Carl remains the lazier of the two," he said.

The speech skills of the boys have also picked up, he said.

"Carl and Clarence have done remarkably well, exceeding our best expectations since their separation," Goodrich also said in a recent CHAM medical bulletin.

"We are encouraged by their continued development and lack of significant medical problems," he said. "Their progress is remarkable and it is a pleasure to watch them as they move around to explore a world that had been out of their reach," he added.

SC sets deadline for ground rules of protest

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PRESIDENTIAL Electoral Tribunal yesterday set a July 17 deadline for the submission of a list of suggested procedures and probable hearing officers for the partial determination of defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda's electoral protest.

But even before the deliberation for the partial determination of protest has begun, both sides already predict victory.

Legarda's lawyer, Sixto Brillantes, said Legarda would recover "plenty" of votes in Cebu alone, although he declined to give a figure because he does not want the side of Vice-President Noli de Castro to know yet what it would be.

"Definitely there is substantial fraud and irregularities committed in Cebu that is why we agreed for a partial determination," Brillantes told reporters at the Supreme Court yesterday after the preliminary conference for the partial determination of protest.

1.2-M edge?

Cebu and Lanao del Sur are the pilot provinces whose ballots and election returns would be the subject of the partial determination of the protest.

Legarda earlier said she should have won by as much as 1.2 million votes over De Castro.

De Castro's lawyer Romulo Macalintal, for his part, said there were no massive irregularities in contested provinces.

He also said that even if there would be irregularities shown, these would not affect the votes for the national candidates.

"We are very very confident that the vote lead of the Vice President would not be affected because the ballots have been properly revised. If there would be irregularities in some precincts, that would not be material because apparently the alleged irregularity involved local officials," he said.

Macalintal also said he sought the partial determination of the protest, to which Legarda's camp agreed, because the protest might take longer to resolve without it.

He said if there were no irregularities shown in Cebu, Legarda's camp may withdraw its protest already.

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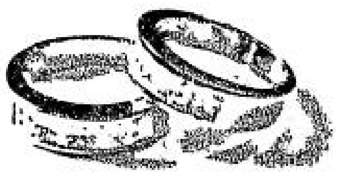

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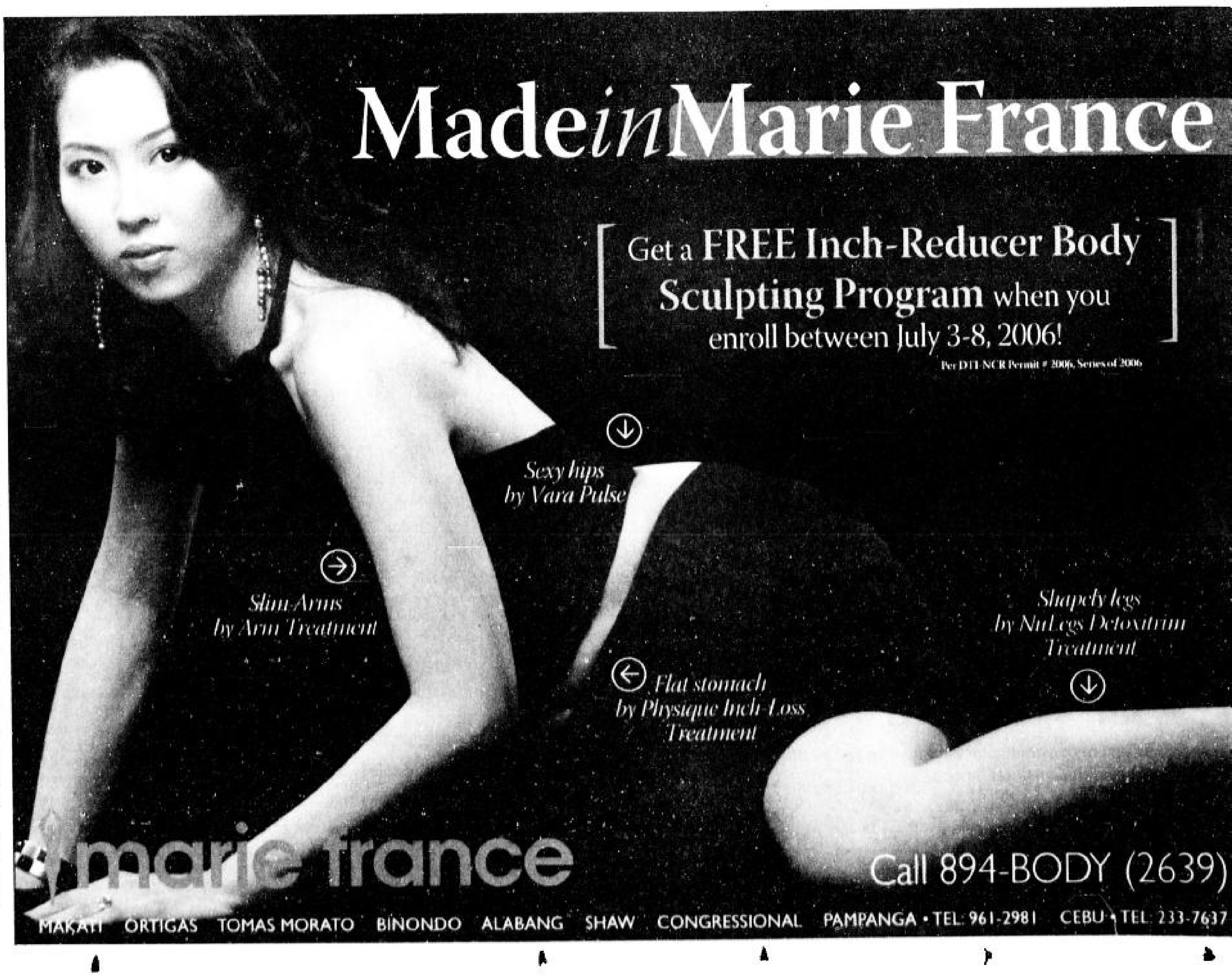

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RP hits North Korea missile tests

THE PHILIPPINES YESTERDAY expressed concern over North Korea's test-firing of six missiles, with senior officials of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo calling the exercise a threat to world peace and urging a stop to Pyongyang's missile program.

"Anything that will threaten world peace should be a concern of everyone, especially members of the UN, and all peace-loving nations," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters.

"Therefore, we take this seriously and we are hopeful that this program will not be pursued anymore," Ermita said.

Manila is "hopeful that the powerful countries and the UN will be in a position to really stop this because it is a threat to world peace," he added.

Impact on Asia-Pacific

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo also voiced out the government's "deep concern" over the North Korean missile tests, warning that these would have a "negative impact on the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the Asia-Pacific region."

"The Philippines stresses the need for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the (North Korea) nuclear issue and therefore joins the international community in calling for North Korea to immediately cease such missile test-firing activities and to resume the process of diplomatic negotiations," Romulo said in a statement.

The tests "run counter to the confidence-building efforts being undertaken by the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Regional Forum," he added.

The missile tests by the Stalinist state triggered a flurry of diplomatic initiatives, headlined by a meeting of the UN Security Council to be convened later Wednesday. *Reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Volt C. Contreras and AFP*

GMA not in the mood to talk peace with Reds

From page A1

ways and means to end armed conflicts in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Dureza said "the doors to peace are open" but formal negotiations could only resume if the rebels agreed to certain conditions. He did not elaborate on those terms.

Top leaders of the communist-led National Democratic Front flew to Oslo separately from their Netherlands base earlier this week to urge the Norwegians to encourage the Arroyo administration to return to the negotiating table.

Norway has been brokering talks between Manila and communist leaders in an effort to end 38 years of conflict that has killed more than 40,000 people.

The talks were suspended in 2004 after the rebels demanded that the government ask the European Union and the United States to remove them from the EU and US list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Norwegians in Manila

On June 14, or two days before Ms Arroyo declared an intensified campaign against communist rebels, senior officials of the Norwegian foreign ministry were in Manila to ask whether the two sides could return to the negotiating table, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Ermita said Malacañang told the Norwegians that this was possible only if the CPP did not set preconditions that would place the government "under the gun."

The government must see "sincerity" from the rebels if talks are to resume, he said.

New executive order

Ermita said the Palace had asked the government peace panel led by former Labor Secretary Nieves Confesor to assess the NDF offer of negotiations. "I have told Jesus Dureza to sit down with the panel and come up with your recommendations," he said.

But Ermita said the government was not softening its stance on the communist rebels.

At ceremonies that installed Oscar Calderon as the new PNP chief in Camp Crame, Ms Arroyo announced that she was signing an executive order this week that will see the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines teaming up to fight the New People's Army, the armed wing of the CPP.

"As we run to the ground the armed core of the terrorist Left, we will take away the fears that the rebels try to instill on people and we will beat them on their armed objective by focusing on nation building," Ms Arroyo said in a speech.

In his acceptance speech, Calderon said: "Our Commander in Chief has spoken. On her orders we shall move to crush the insurgency and rebellion at its core."

But Calderon said government troops must fight "not as conquering warriors but as partners of the people in reclaiming victory for justice and democracy."

True battlefield

The true battlefield, Calderon said, lies not in the mountains but in the hearts and minds of the public.

Senators, however, urged the Palace to reconsider its hardline stance against a fresh offer by the NDF to restart the peace talks.

"Talking peace is always better than a shooting war," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said. "The government, however, must be prepared to do what needs to be done to assert its sovereignty."

Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Ramon Magsaysay Jr. said the government must talk with communist rebels despite its fresh "all-out war" against them.

Return of Marcos policy

In the House of Representatives, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said Malacañang's rejection of the NDF's peace initiative could signal the return of the Marcos-era policy of annihilation of members of the underground movement.

"Corollarily, she (Ms Arroyo) already ordered the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police to be partners in the pursuit of counterinsurgency operations," he said.

Ocampo pointed out that the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos did the same—combine the military and police forces to pursue rebels in the countryside.

Cops strategy vs rebels

Calderon was expected to hold a command conference with senior officers yesterday afternoon, when he would spell out his initial priorities.

After the ceremony, Calderon told the INQUIRER that "strategies will be implemented" against the insurgency.

Sources in Camp Crame earlier said these strategies included encouraging soldiers, policemen and civilians to file charges against rebels for attacks.

They also included the tapping of people at the barangay level to help "determine the inner workings of communists," said a senior officer who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Like Cafgu

The officer said in a recent interview that the PNP might train a force similar to the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu), a paramilitary unit under the supervision of the military.

While Cafgus are mostly concerned with perimeter defense, the police auxiliary will help in law enforcement. "They might also be utilized in intelligence gathering," the official said. *Reports from Reuters, AFP, Christine O. Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac and Luige A. del Puerto*

'All-out war means more loose guns'

From page A1

from armed conflict were veritable sources of loose firearms.

"Where else will the insurgents get their firearms? Many of their guns also come from the soldiers themselves," said Mei Orias, AI-Pilipinas media officer.

Gov't arsenal No. 1 source

The Gaston Ortigas Peace Institute (Gopi), a member of Philansa, said the government arsenal was one of the three main sources of loose arms in the country. The others are local manufacturers and smugglers.

"Corruption results in the leakage of state-owned weapons," said Beverly Orozco of Gopi, referring to unscrupulous members of the military selling guns and ammunition to private individuals and groups, including criminals and insurgents.

Between 2005 and the first quarter of 2006, there were 450,000 unregistered firearms in the country, some 150,000 of which were suspected to be in the hands of communist rebels and Moro secessionists in Mindanao, said Gopi, citing statistics from the Philippine National Police.

UN meet on small arms

"This kind of phenomenon doesn't only happen in the Philippines but also in other countries engaged in armed conflict or in transition from a civil war," Orias said.

Philansa is calling on the government to strengthen controls on arms transfer in the wake of a United Nations meeting on curbing the illicit small arms trade.

"If this opportunity to agree on global principles will be passed up, there will not be another chance to talk about small arms until 2011. By then, another 1.7 million people in the world would have been killed," said Dr. Jasmin Galace of the Miriam College Center for Peace Education.

640-M guns

There are 640 million guns in the world, with 8 million new ones manufactured every year, according to Galace.

"Between 10 and 14 billion rounds of ammunition are made each year, enough to kill everyone on the planet twice over," she said.

Wilnor Papa, another AI-Pilipinas official, said the government's all-out war was not the solution to the 38-year communist insurgency.

"So long as there is a homeless person out on the street, there'll always be a rebel," Papa said.

AI-Pilipinas maintains that social justice and basic services will solve the insurgency more than an all-out war ever will.

Video boosts Palace to use Marcos powers …

From page A1

ground dictates that it needs to be declared," said Ermita, speaking in English and Tagalog.

If the situation becomes serious, Ermita said the next steps could be similar to the moves made by Marcos in the early 1970s—the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and later the declaration of martial law.

"But I would not want to say that it is easy to issue these proclamations," said Ermita, who stressed that the government would only act depending on the situation.

Caution from Biazon

Ermita also disclosed Malacañang's resolve to pin down Lim and his supporters with an eye on making them an example to discourage further military adventurism.

"The least I can say (is) he will be pinned down because of the incontrovertible evidence about the plot on Feb. 24," said Ermita referring to the Lim video.

"This administration under President Arroyo will have full resolve to see this through to its successful conclusion," said Ermita who noted that Malacañang would have wanted to resolve the case soon "if we are under other political conditions."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon warned the military to proceed cautiously. He said the probe should be conducted in a credible and fair manner.

"They are not sure of the extent of the disgruntlement down there," said the former Armed Forces chief of staff who now heads the Senate defense committee.

Military court

Ermita said Lim had no choice but to "face up to the situation" through the military justice system.

"It's just too bad for him because he even told the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) that he had nothing to do with it," said Ermita. "I'm sure (they will think twice now), especially in their position where we can clearly see the evidence against them."

In a statement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "We sympathize with General Lim in that he was apparently used by self-serving politicians then abandoned by the roadside."

Bunye said the government had a duty to insulate the Armed Forces by ensuring that military justice take its course. "We cannot allow the Armed Forces to be exploited by power-hungry politicians to the detriment of the chain of command."

He said that the videotape "seals the truth" on the failed putsch. "It clearly marks a conspiracy that had to be dismantled which President Arroyo aptly did at that time," Bunye said.

Won't be pressured

But Gen. Generoso Senga, Armed Forces chief of staff, said that the military would not be rushed into ordering an immediate court-martial for Lim and his men.

The airing of the Lim video on ANC television on Monday night was followed by a leak to a newspaper—later denied officially—that a military panel had recommended court-martial proceedings against Lim, 37 other officers and 27 soldiers.

Asked if he was being forced to act on the Lim case, Senga replied, "I do not think so. I'm not pressured by anything ... My instruction was to see to it that the investigation is conducted properly, that everybody is given a chance to air their side. The expeditious conclusion of this investigation is secondary only to doing it properly."

Quick probe

Senga said the public should be "a little more patient" with the fact-finding panel, led by Rear Adm. Rufino Lopez Jr., the Armed Forces inspector general.

He acknowledged that Malacañang wanted the investigation to be completed soon.

"The President just said, let justice be done and apply the law to the fullest extent," he said.

On the other hand, Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Army chief, expressed eagerness to start the court-martial against Lim and his men.

"We will not preempt the results of the fact-finding investigation but I understand the report will be coming out in a week or two," Esperon said. "I would imagine that if the general court-martial will be convened within July then the trial can start in July or August."

Esperon, seen as a leading candidate to become AFP chief of staff when Senga retires on July 21, said that if it was found that the video was a prima facie evidence against Lim, he would put him immediately under detention. Lim currently is confined to his Fort Bonifacio quarters.

"Who is he to judge the President to be a bogus president?" Esperon said.

Yesterday, the NBI issued a subpoena on Lim to appear in an inquiry on Friday on the video. Also summoned was Col. Januario Caringal, who is allegedly standing behind Lim in the footage. *With reports from Dona Z. Pazzibugan, TJ Burgonio and Margaux C. Ortiz*

Corrections

OLALIA

ALBANO

IN THE JULY 5 ISSUE, a wrong photo (left) accompanied the story—"Burial day of Albano declared town holiday"—on Page A16 of the Across the Nation section. The man shown on the photo is Benjamin Olalia Sr.—not the late Mayor Delfinito Albano (right).

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the caption of a front-page photo of Jose Ma. Sison misspelled the name of the airport in Amsterdam. The correct spelling of the airport is Schiphol—not Schipol.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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UP ALUMNI AWARDEE
Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr., the Philippines' Permanent Representative to the United Nations, shown here presiding over the UN Security Council when it was the Philippines' turn to head the council, has recently been conferred the Special Presidential Award of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association for his "exemplary and distinguished 43-year record in the diplomatic service and his impact on the socio-economic, political and cultural life of the nation." The award was presented by Jaime S. de los Santos, UPAA president, and Dr. Emerlinda R. Roman, UP president. Photo shows Baja with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan presiding over the Security Council during the Philippines' 2004-2005 term at the helm of the powerful UN body. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Coast Guard to clear bay of sulfuric acid

THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD IS TAKING CARE of the cleanup of the more than one thousand tons of sulfuric acid that is threatening to spill into the Batangas Bay after a barge sank in late June.

Antonio Principe, regional environmental director for southern Tagalog, told reporters the clean up operations is expected to start either today or tomorrow.

Principe said the PCG has hired Hideya Waste Management Corp. to conduct the cleanup of the bay.

He said the British insurance firm that covers the sunken Billy Star barge will spend for the clean-up costs.

He said the salvage operations would involve the transfer of the sulfuric acid from the four "bullet tanks" of Billy Star to another vessel where the chemical will be neutralized. The neutralized acid would then be disposed 25 nautical miles southeast of Lubang Island. *Norman Bordadora*

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Absentee voting registration a disappointment for Comelec

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS yesterday expressed disappointment over the ongoing registration for overseas absentee voters—with only about 76,000 registered, short of the agency's one million target before the Aug. 31 deadline.

Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. said 70 percent of the new voters were departing overseas Filipino workers who registered in booths at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

While the two booths generate 400 to 500 registrants every day, the situation is different in the Philippine embassies, consulates and overseas labor offices.

"Unfortunately, the turnout of registrants abroad is a bit slow because of certain factors," Tuason, head of the Comelec Committee on Overseas Absentee Voting, told reporters.

Chief among these, he said, is the distance in Europe and Africa, where applicants have to travel to another country that has a Philippine embassy or consulate to register.

Tuason also said resident immigrants and those with double citizenships, especially those in the United States, were also hesitant to register because of the requirement that they have to sign an affidavit that they would return to the Philippines within two years.

The attitude and perception of Filipinos residing and working abroad were also hampering the registration efforts, according to Tuason.

"There has been greater interest for the OAV in many Filipino communities but in others, there is apathy and uncertainty," he said.

Tuason and other Comelec officials have toured or will be touring Filipino communities abroad to help boost interest for the OAV.

Jun Molina, a staff at the COAV office, earlier said the figures on registration is expected to rise as embassies and consulates submit their reports on July 15.

So far, he said, Filipino domestics in Hong Kong are the biggest number of new voters, with over 35,000 registering in the past months.

A concern of the COAV, Molina said, are the Filipino seafarers, many of whom do not want to register anymore on the wrong belief that they would not be able to vote since there they would be moving from one port to another.

Molina said new regulations approved by the Comelec last year allowed seamen to cast their votes—either in person or by mail—in any port of call where there is a voting center.

In next year's midterm elections, seafarers would be given 60 days (March 16-May 14) and land-based overseas Filipinos 30 days (April 15-May 14) to cast their vote.

The registration for overseas absentee voters began Oct. 30, 2005 and ends Aug. 31 this year.

Under the law, absentee voters may vote for president, vice president, and party list representatives, but not for congressmen and local officials.

SMC union: New labor secretary anti-labor

By Jerome Aning

WORKERS FROM food and beverage conglomerate San Miguel Corp. yesterday expressed their opposition to the appointment of Arturo Brion as new labor secretary, saying he made life difficult for them when he served as one of SMC's corporate counsels.

The Ilaw at Buklod ng mga Manggagawa sa San Miguel Corporation, in a statement, alleged that Brion showed a "strongly anti-union" bias in 1994 when he was an associate of the Siguion-Reyna Montecillo and Ongsiangko law firm, which handled SMC's legal affairs.

Freezing of funds

Yolito Fadriquelan, IBM-SMC secretary general recalled that Brion worked to freeze union funds, particularly the special assessment fee intended for union-related activities and other services for SMC workers.

The union fought hard for a couple of years before it was able to recover control over the funds.

Brion also "reared company unions and yellow labor leaders that easily compromised to corporate interests" when he was at SMC, Fadriquelan added.

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Lim backers dared: Come out, be proud

LIM reportedly talked to junior officers not to assault Palace.

SEÑERES: I feel bad for Lim because he has been left on his own.

DE VILLA turns down leadership role in transition council.

ORBOS: I don't have the stature for soldiers to listen to me.

From page A1

they encouraged Lim. What they did is patriotic. Why should not the military break the chain of command when this government is very crooked?" Señeres said.

Señeres claimed Lim has many other supporters beyond the 38 officers and 27 enlisted personnel implicated in the supposed Feb. 24 plot.

"My point is, all the backers of General Lim should now come out in the open," he said, adding they should stop issuing denials.

"They cannot fight evil under cover of darkness," he insisted.

'We're too many'

"If (the President) wants to put us in jail, let her try but she can't do it because we're too many," Señeres said.

Orbos and De Villa have denied involvement in the alleged plot. The INQUIRER has been unable to reach Cojuangco, Cruz and Zobel for comment.

The Lim video is widely believed to have been prepared for broadcast on Feb. 24 as part of an alleged plot to oust the 59-year-old President that was aborted and prompted the declaration of a weeklong state of national emergency.

The footage had never been shown until ANC got hold of it. It was aired amid a renewed opposition effort to oust Ms Arroyo. Four impeachment complaints were lodged last week against the President, reviving charges she stole the May 2004 elections, among other alleged culpable violations of the Constitution.

Malacañang denies it gave the video to ANC although Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has admitted it has a copy of the television footage and a transcript of the statement read by Lim provided by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Palace officials said ABC-5 did the footage. ABC-5 denies this.

ABC-5 television

Señeres told the INQUIRER that the video was pre-taped by the ABC-5 staff with Cojuangco's knowledge. When the plot failed, Cojuangco was literally left holding the tape, he said.

"I know for a fact (Cojuangco) tried to suppress the tape. He thought it won't come out anymore so we were all surprised it came out. But maybe a technician got a copy and sold it to ABS-CBN," Señeres said.

He admitted he did not personally meet with Cojuangco but insisted, "I know for a fact he's part of it. He arranged the pre-taped video of Lim."

According to a military fact-finding report on the failed Feb. 24 plot, Lim had named Orbos and De Villa as leaders of the "transition council" that would take over government upon Ms Arroyo's exit.

"Orbos is denying it. He should not be afraid," said Señeres, a lawyer who has maintained that unlike a coup d'etat, a withdrawal of support from the Commander in Chief is not a crime.

No crime committed

"There is no crime committed. Withdrawal of support is not a crime under our laws, even under military laws," he said.

If it were so, he said, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes and former President Fidel Ramos would have been penalized for what they had done while in active service.

As AFP chief of staff, Reyes withdrew support from then President Joseph Estrada that led to his ouster in 2001. Ramos, then deputy AFP chief of staff, joined then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile in defecting from the Ferdinand Marcos regime and ignited Edsa I.

Señeres said Orbos and De Villa had been asked by disgruntled military units to be part of the transition government.

"I know for a fact Orbos was offered a part in the transition council. I endorsed Orbos to head the transition council. I did not endorse De Villa because of his leadership style. He is *"teka-teka"* [literally meaning, wait]," he said.

Señeres said he was offered the foreign affairs or labor post, but he flatly rejected this, saying he was finished with government posts.

Señeres was a former ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. He was named by Estrada as chair of the National Labor Relations Commission, a post he gave up last year.

Go-between

Señeres named former journalist Cecilio Arillo as Orbos' "go-between" to Lim and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who was reportedly offered a place in the transition council.

In a statement, Lacson said: "My name was just placed there and I definitely had no knowledge until now, much less permission to be included in the council."

Señeres said Arillo had offered him "the post of foreign secretary or labor, which I declined."

"But I consented to be part of the effort to oust the spurious president," Señeres said.

"Also F.F. Cruz Jr. and Iñigo Zobel. They're part of the withdrawal of support (plot). I had a meeting with them in the mansion of F.F. Cruz in Forbes Park. We watched (Ms Arroyo's) 'I'm sorry'," he said, referring to the President's televised speech on June 25, 2005, on the "Hello Garci" scandal.

"I'm naming names now ... Why won't they come out in the open?" Señeres insisted.

What Went Before

A CONTROVERSIAL TIME MAGAZINE article relates how longtime Arroyo critic Pastor "Boy" Saycon allegedly phoned a man code-named Delta on Feb. 23 to ask him about the supposed plan against the President. The man, later identified as Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, reportedly replied that it was "all systems go" for the planned march the following morning toward the Edsa Shrine, where protesters from the military and Church would converge.

According to Malacañang, Lim and Marine brigade commander Col. Ariel Querubin informed Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga on Feb. 23 that young officers and soldiers planned to join rallies on the 24th, where a Marine general allegedly planned to withdraw support from the Arroyo administration. The two officers reportedly hinted they might join the protesters.

Senga discussed the issue with the commanding generals of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Lim and Querubin were supposedly advised to stop soldiers from joining the rallies, but they allegedly seemed unwilling to do so. Senga then relieved Lim of his post as commander of the Army's elite Scout Rangers, and announced his arrest the following morning.

Malacañang later presented a documentary saying Lim and Querubin had connived with communists and the Magdalo group to overthrow the Arroyo administration. Lim denied this on March 8, his first public appearance after the arrest.

In the same month, the Philippine Army recommended court-martial proceedings against Lim and 19 other Army officers, after investigating 59 officers and 37 enlisted personnel. Others not included in the recommendation could still face administrative or criminal charges at the Army level, said Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro.

Senga ordered an ad hoc inquiry body headed by Inspector General Rear Admiral Rufino Lopez to see if Lim and other officers could be charged before a court-martial.

Lim is restricted to Fort Bonifacio, while the inquiry body is finalizing its decision.

Lim had been involved in a previous attempt to oust a President. As Army captain, he participated in the failed December 1989 coup against then President Corazon Aquino. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

Civilian leaders stopped soldiers from attacking Palace

From page A1

Also by that time, the civilians' nonviolent option had prevailed.

A rebel junior officer who used the alias Captain Batingaw, in an interview with Arnold Clavio of GMA 7, said while the rebel soldiers had no hand in the recent spate of bombings, they had not dropped the plan to hit Malacañang.

"If we were to move, we won't do such a thing," said the officer, referring to the bombings.

"We would strike right in the heart of the Palace. Right there. We will be there in (a) swift, fast and lightning strike," he said in the interview, a transcript of which was furnished the INQUIRER.

In the planned assaults, rebel soldiers from the Scout Rangers and the Marines were to take the front line. Capt. Ruben Guinolbay was to lead the Scout Rangers; Lt. Col. Alex Balutan the Marines.

Civilian leaders, however, disagreed with the planned assault, preferring that Ms Arroyo's removal be carried out without violence and with a semblance of constitutionality. Following negotiations, the Palace assault was abandoned.

Santiago's charge

In October last year, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago tagged Former President Corazon Aquino and Senate President Franklin Drilon in a supposed plot that would entail "physically removing" Ms Arroyo from Malacañang.

"I was surprised," Ms Aquino said at that time. "All I can say about Miriam is that she has a very wild imagination. My God! Me, of all people? I was a victim of seven coup attempts and I've never believed in violence."

Just as the military rebels planned to bring about Ms Arroyo's downfall with firepower, civilian leaders went around trying to unite the different factions that wanted the President ousted but had different motives for doing so.

A staff member of a senator who was approached by one of the leaders said it was Oscar Orbos, former executive secretary and currently a TV host, who served as the "workhorse" in efforts to put together a united civilian front in the anti-Arroyo plot.

'Why listen to us?'

"He was the one going around talking to the camps of different people," said the senator's staffer.

Orbos went around the camps of ousted President Joseph Estrada and Ms Aquino.

But Orbos, in a phone interview, denied his involvement.

"I don't have the way, I don't have the organization, I don't have the stature for soldiers to listen to me. Why would a colonel listen to me," said Orbos.

The Orbos plan

But the source said Orbos had different types of sales pitch for Estrada and Ms Aquino.

To the Aquino camp, the sources said, Orbos dangled the possible leadership of Drilon in a transition council upon the removal of Ms Arroyo. This appealed to Ms Aquino because, the sources said, it adhered to the 1987 Constitution, Drilon then being third in the line of succession to the presidency in the event of a vacancy.

To the Estrada camp, Orbos raised the possibility of the former President, who was ousted on charges of large-scale gambling bribery and corruption, heading the transition council.

Orbos' middle man for Estrada was former Sen. Vicente Sotto III.

"Erap's men entertained ideas of going out into the streets and chanting Erap, Erap in the hope of their leader becoming president again," said one source close to Estrada.

The aborted assault that was set on Feb. 13 and reset on Feb. 19 was to be carried out in the early morning of Feb. 24, hours before celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the Edsa People Power Revolution got under way.

Bloodless alternative

Malacañang had been alerted to the plan, the sources said, pointing out the container vans and the heavy fortification around Malacañang in the early morning of Feb. 24.

By that time, leaders of the rebel soldiers also had agreed to the bloodless alternative proposed on Feb. 23 by the key civilian architects of the plot.

That alternative was the withdrawal of support from Ms Arroyo by officers and men of the Scout Rangers, the Marines and the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police who would then join an opposition protest march and rally.

The change surprised junior officers, the sources said. They complained that an agreement for a 72-hour notice for any change in plans was not honored.

The sources said Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin prevailed upon the junior officers, led by Guinolbay and Balutan, to abandon the planned assault.

Querubin talked the junior rebel officers out of the plan on Feb. 13. Lim did the same on Feb. 19.

Most elaborate plot

The Feb. 19 plan was the most elaborate, said one source.

The plotters wanted to bring in Lt. Gen. Abner Cabalquinto, head of the National Capital Region Defense Command, and Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, whose role would be simply not to move or order his troops to defend Ms Arroyo.

Cabalquinto had expressed hesitance because he was to retire soon, said one military source.

Palparan told INQUIRER correspondent Tonette Orejas that he would never be involved in any plot that also involved the communists.

The sources, however, said Cabalquinto and Palparan had a common line when they were approached by the plotters—talk to our men.

The Feb. 19 operation, according to a military officer, included a plan for rebel soldiers and officers to take into custody Maj. Gen. Tolentino of the Northern Luzon Command, reputedly fiercely loyal to Ms Arroyo.

At least two Air Force pilots were recruited, along with several ground troops of the special operations wing of the Philippine Air Force.

Assault a 'big risk'

An officer close to Lim said prior to those dates, he hosted a meeting inside Fort Bonifacio, the Army headquarters, for Lim and a group of junior officers who wanted to move on Malacañang.

At one point, Lim, according to the officer, advised the junior officers to "make sure you win."

"I have nothing against what you plan, but you must make sure of victory," the officer quoted Lim as telling the junior officers in the Fort Bonifacio meeting.

But as antiviolence civilian leaders started to win more support from the military component of the plot, Lim had a change of heart, according to the officer.

In another meeting also in a house in Fort Bonifacio, Lim shouted in anger at the junior officers and told them their plan was a "big risk."

But whether the plot to oust Ms Arroyo started with a bang or climaxed in the march of armed Marines, Scout Rangers and SAF men on Ayala, its civilian and military architects were apparently already prepared for victory.

Transition council

A paper reportedly prepared by Orbos discussed extensively the use of a civilian transition council (CTC) that would take over from Ms Arroyo. A group, called the Solidarity Movement to Save the Republic, would drum up public support for the council.

It made no mention of the plan to assault Malacañang but said "although unlikely at this time, a military junta ... cannot be discounted if the political crisis extends and the economic situation worsens."

"These measures, however, are very dangerous and should, as much as possible, be avoided," the paper said.

The paper said a CTC was the best option in a vacuum.

Program of gov't

"The CTC will function much like a caretaker government, or a board of directors in a corporation," it said.

Some of the steps that the council wanted to take were not new -- like dealing with prices of commodities, conserving energy, streamlining of the bureaucracy, drafting of a new constitution, but through a constitutional commission.

Two new initiatives that the council wanted to take were the issuance of national IDs to help in the war on terror and a logging ban for three to five years to deal with environmental concerns.

An organizational chart also prepared by leaders of the plot showed the council having coequal bodies named consultative council and an advisory board to be composed of past presidents and "other eminent persons."

Directly below the main council is the executive secretary and below them are Cabinet members and local governments, according to the organizational chart.

The main council composition, according to the flow chart, would be made of politicians, youth leaders, civil society, members of the academe, business leaders, "general public," representatives from the Visayas and Mindanao.

Its chair would serve as head of state and commander in chief.

The chart also revealed plans to merge the departments of public works and highways and transportation.

'Post-GMA scenarios'

Orbos denied he authored any paper detailing the functions of the transition council but said he had seen other similar papers that discussed "post-GMA scenarios."

"People want to discuss this academically," he said. "People should talk about it because we have to find a solution. Even Gloria (Ms Arroyo) should look for a way out of this."

But the plot unraveled and led to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga taking Lim into custody.

The planned march of soldiers and officers who were to declare their withdrawal of support for Ms Arroyo on Ayala Avenue was not to be.

Its architects did not lose hope, however.

In the morning of Feb. 26, a Sunday, a meeting of those involved in the plan, including Orbos, took place.

Marine standoff

Following that meeting, a battalion of Marines drove in their tanks and armored personnel carriers to their headquarters, led by Querubin and another Marine colonel, starting a standoff that would last into the night.

The standoff ended in a dialogue among Marine officers and the griping Marines, who had rushed to their headquarters over the relief of their commander, returned to barracks.

Ms Aquino tried to enter the Marine headquarters on what she said was a mission of prayer but was blocked on her way.

A position was offered to Senga in the council. Some sources said it was the chairmanship of the transition council, but later other sources would say that it was to lead a body that would be called National Compliance Committee.

Its sole purpose was to be the watchdog of the main council and monitor its decisions and actions and make sure they do not stray from the policies that were outlined in the paper that was prepared by Orbos and agreed upon by other leaders of the plot.

Contacts with communists

As the civilian and military leaders of the plan discussed how to oust Ms Arroyo and run government after that, another leader went around town establishing contact with top leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Former Sen. Gregorio Honasan had reportedly made contact with top communist leaders, but it remained unclear what the communists' role would be in the council.

One source said the guerrillas would be tapped for their skills in mobilizing people in rallies.

"But it was a failed plot because the methods that these people wanted were contradicting each other," said one source.

RP paying whopping price for dirty water

By Christian V. Esguerra

HOW MUCH DOES DIRTY WATER cost for Filipinos every year?

It's P3.3 billion in the health sector, P17 billion in the fishing industry, and another P47 billion in tourism, according to the World Bank Group study titled "Philippines: Meeting Infrastructure Challenges."

The whopping cost, among several other reasons, have prompted key government agencies and other stakeholders to organize the first Philippine Sanitation Summit, a comprehensive effort to once and for all address the issue of clean water in the country.

In a four-page declaration, participants admitted that "progress in sanitation and wastewater management and improvements in outcomes have not been apparent," considering that the country was already halfway into the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

CLEAN WATER: "Time to stop talking and start doing something about it." LYN RILLON

Long way to go

Among the targets was to "halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation."

The Philippines still has a long way to go.

During the summit, Rep. Augusto Baculio, author of the Clean Water Act, noted that only seven percent of Filipino households had sewage treatment. He said the statistics ranks the Philippines third among the worst performers on this category in Asia.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka fare better with 30 percent, and Cambodia with 40 percent, he said.

"It's about time that we stop simply talking (about the problem) and start doing something about it," he said in his speech.

The World Bank study noted that access to safe drinking water "deteriorated" from 81.4 percent in 1999 to 80 percent in 2002.

Among those falling under the lowest 40 percent of the population in terms of income, access was also down from 71.5 percent to 70.2 percent during the same period, according to the study.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III yesterday said the problem with dirty water ultimately jeopardized public health.

"A lot of the problems today are really an offshoot of poor sanitation and hygiene," he said in a press conference.

"At the end of the day when you look at the net problem, it's all about water- or food-borne diseases such diarrhea and cholera."

One solution, the Clean Water Act of 2004, called for sewage treatment or septage management in five years, according to Baculio. But the World Bank noted that the implementation required around P35 billion in annual additional expenditures.

In the summit declaration, participants committed to "renew efforts to reach those at the margins of service and those who remain without access to hygiene and sanitation services."

Declaration

They also promised to accelerate the implementation of the Clean Water Act while developing and financing a National Sewerage and Septage Management Program around the country.

The pioneering declaration was signed by the Departments of Health, Environment and Natural Resources, Education, Public Works and Highways, Interior and Local Government, and the congressional committees on ecology and environment.

It also included commitments from the National Economic and Development Authority, Local Water Utilities Administration, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, and the National Water Resources Board.

In the issue of waste water management, Baculio said much of the problem lay with establishments with no existing treatment facilities or even a septic tank.

He said those built after the Clean Water Act took effect have since been complying with this important requirement.

Port of Manila collection up

THE PORT OF MANILA EXCEEDED ITS JUNE target of P6.03 billion by P161.14 million, bringing its cumulative collection for the first half of the year to P32.9 billion.

Under Horacio P. Suansing Jr. who took over as district collector in June last year, the Port of Manila has exceeded its cash collection target for the first six months by 6 percent, or P1.97 billion.

In a statement, Suansing said the Port of Manila now accounted for 36 percent of the revenues of the entire Bureau of Customs. The remaining 64 percent of the revenues are collected by the bureau's 13 districts nationwide.

Suansing said the Port of Manila exceeded its collection target from January to June despite the implementation of the government's progressive tariff reduction program.

'Mark' cigarettes didn't violate copyrights — SC

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ruled that Lucio Tan's Fortune Tobacco did not infringe on the copyright of three foreign companies when it manufactured and sold "Mark" cigarettes.

In a June 27 decision, the Supreme Court said the registered trademarks "Mark VII," "Mark Ten" and "Lark" of Philip Morris Inc., Benson and Hedges Inc. and Fabriques de Tabac Reunies (now known as Philip Morris Products S.A.) were not similar enough to Fortune Tobacco's "Mark" to create confusion.

The tribunal also said the three cigarette companies failed to support their claim that their trademarks had acquired goodwill in the Philippines that would entitle them to protection even without actual use in the country under the Paris Convention.

Likewise, it also said the companies did not show that they had used their trademark in the Philippines before Fortune Tobacco began using "Mark."

"For lack of convincing proof on the part of petitioners of actual use of their registered trademark prior to respondent's use of its mark and for petitioners' failure to demonstrate confusing similarity between said trademarks, the dismissal of their basic complaint for infringement and the concomitant plea for damages must be affirmed," the Supreme Court said in its decision upholding earlier rulings of the Court of Appeals and the Pasig regional trial court.

The Supreme Court said that even if the foreign companies registered their trademark, they should show that they had actually used it in the Philippines.

It said registration alone does not give the registrant absolute right to the trademark and that not using the trademark counters the presumption of trademark ownership, "as what happened here when petitioners no less admitted not doing business in the country."

"Most importantly, we stress that registration in the Philippines of trademarks does not ipso facto convey an absolute right or exclusive ownership thereof," the Supreme Court said. "Trademark is a creation of use and, therefore, actual use is prerequisite to exclusive ownership."

There was also no "likelihood of confusion" of Fortune Tobacco's "Mark" with the three foreign companies' "Mark VII, "Mark Ten" and "Lark," according to the high tribunal.

"The striking dissimilarities are significant enough to warn any purchaser that one is different from the other," it said.

The Supreme Court also said it was unlikely for the public to be confused into thinking that "Mark" cigarettes were the products of Philip Morris Inc., Benson and Hedges Inc. and Fabriques de Tabac Reunies.

"And lest it be overlooked, no actual commercial use of petitioners' marks in local commerce was proven. There can thus be no occasion for the public in this country, unfamiliar in the first place with petitioners' marks, to be confused," it said.

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JOELLE'S COMPLAINT is displayed by lawyer Dennis Cuna before he and his client, Joelle Pelaez, filed it against several persons, including for President Joseph Estrada, at the Pasig City prosecutor's office. EDWIN BACASMAS

Jamby says she act

By Nikko Dizon

OPPOSITION SENATOR JAMBY MADRIGAL yesterday said she represented the Philippine Senate in her meeting with top officials of the National Democratic Front (NDF) in The Netherlands last week.

"*Ginagawa ko lang ang tungkulin bilang senador ng Pilipinas* (I am just doing my job as Senator of the Philippines)," Madrigal told reporters upon her arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) from her trip to Europe.

Madrigal arrived at the Naia at around 4:30 p.m. via Cathay Pacific Airways flight CX 919.

"I represented the Philippine Senate," Madrigal replied, when asked for her comment on the Palace statement that she was not authorized to represent the government in her meeting with the NDF leaders in The Netherlands.

Madrigal initially declined to talk to reporters, saying she will hold a press conference today at 10:30 a.m. at the Imperial Palace Suites in Quezon City.

But she did give a few, short answers to reporters' questions as, surrounded by three security staff, she made her way to the ramp area where her vehicle was parked.

Her Ford Expedition bore two "Gloria Resign, No to Cha-Cha" bumper stickers.

Asked about her meeting with NDF consultant Jose Ma. Sison, the senator replied: "Very well. It was all for the Filipino people."

Malacañang has criticized Madrigal for signing a joint communiqué with NDF leaders, Sison and Luis Jalandoni, which urged the government to resume the stalled peace talks with communist rebels.

"She (Madrigal) doesn't represent the government," Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said in a press conference held at the Naia yesterday morning

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Erap says Joelle used by Chavit, Malacañang

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Nelson F. Flores

MALACAÑANG AND ITS ALLIES LED BY ILOcos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson are using former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez to harass deposed President Joseph Estrada because the Special Prosecutor failed to prove the criminal charges against him, according to a lawyer of Estrada.

Pelaez, an American citizen, is accusing Estrada and eight others of laundering P2.07 billion worth of stocks and other debt instruments using her name without her knowledge.

She filed yesterday falsification charges against top officials of the United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB) at the Pasig City Prosecutor's Office. Pelaez, 29, said she would just file charges against Estrada this afternoon in Makati.

In a statement, Rufus Rodriguez, a member of the Estrada defense panel, said Malacañang was desperate because Ms Arroyo's power grab will be discussed again as a result of the new impeachment cases filed against her in the House of Representatives.

But Malacañang said it had no hand in the case filed by Pelaez against Estrada. "Its mere speculation..., but I don't see why we should involve Malacañang," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Desperate

Rodriguez said Singson was even more desperate because once Estrada was acquitted by the Sandiganbayan Special Division of plunder and perjury charges, Singson would take his client's place in prison.

The lawyer said the defense team would work for the lifting of Singson's immunity from criminal suit. Singson, in exchange for his testimony against Estrada, was given immunity from suit for his alleged illegal use of public funds from the tobacco excise tax.

Rodriguez expressed sadness that Pelaez was allowing Malacañang and Singson to manipulate her, using a rehashed money laundering "script," which was earlier utilized by her mother Blanquita against Estrada.

Rodriguez said libel cases would be filed against Pelaez, her mother and several others, including a female reporter.

At the Pasig City Prosecutor's Office, Pelaez told reporters that Singson, who had accused Estrada of accepting gambling money, was not behind her complaint.

"I have nothing to do with Chavit Singson. I just want justice to be served," Pelaez said.

Singson was beside Pelaez in some of her television interviews the other afternoon.

UCPB president

Pelaez filed falsification charges against UCPB president Lorenzo Tan and vice president Rafael Bueno Jr. and several others "for conspiring and confederating together in forging my signature" in at least 15 vouchers and checks worth P2.5 billion.

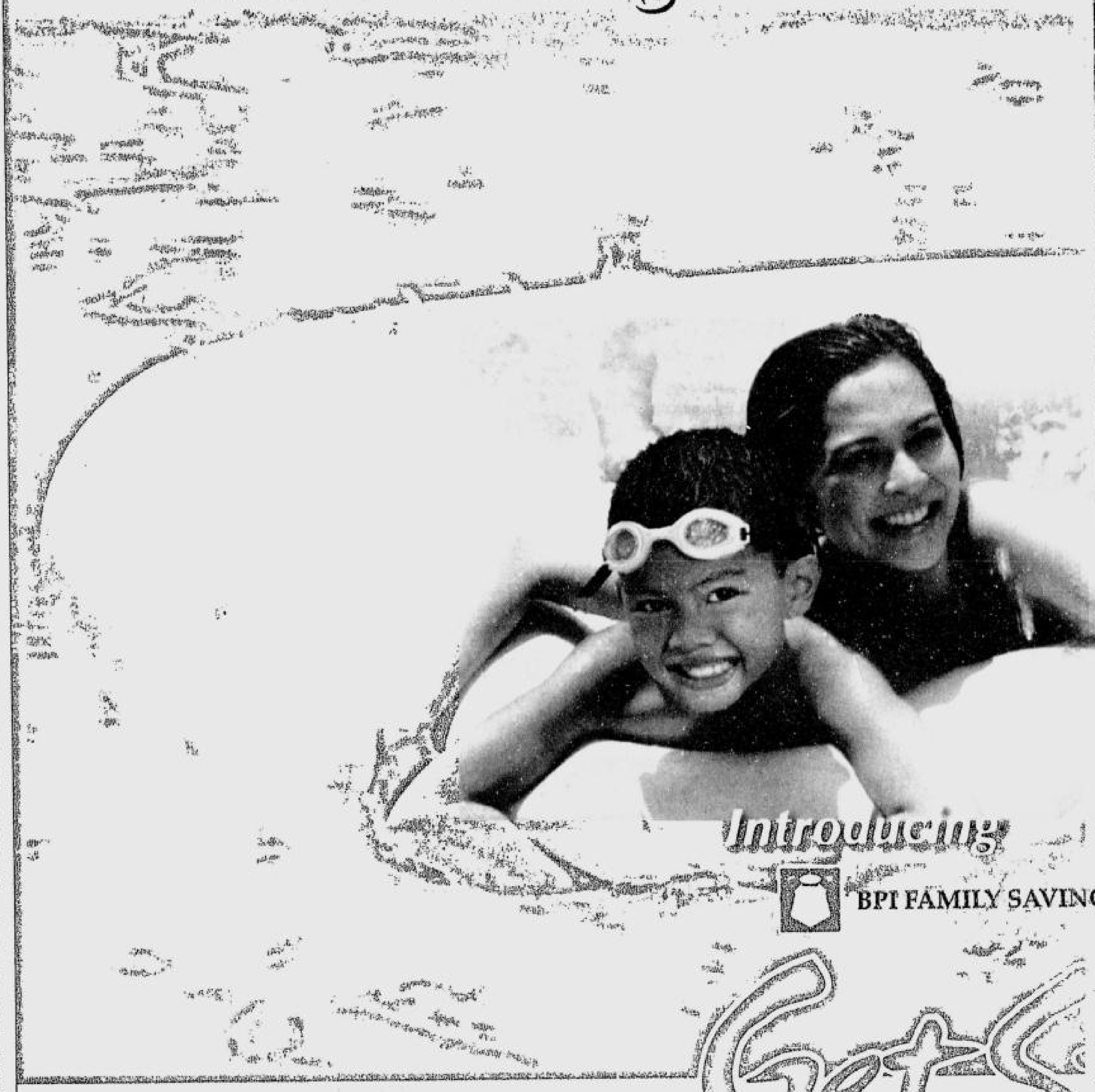
But in statements released to the media, the UCPB denied the allegations and said Pelaez was the one who still owed the bank.

"I was used," said Pelaez, who claimed Estrada had tried to win her by showering her with expensive gifts years ago.

In her complaint, Pelaez alleged that in 2000, San Miguel Corp. executive Ramon Ang offered her a dealership contract, upon Estrada's instructions. Pelaez said she met Estrada in a party at the Renaissance Tower in Ortigas Center in December 1998.

To start her dealership, company officials asked her to loan some capital from the UCPB. Later, she opened an account at the bank. But the dealership never materialized.

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño



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she represented the Senate in
the NDF, the senator said: "I
You ask Senate President Franklin Drilon."

Drilon, however, denied Madrigal was representing the Senate. "That's not true. She was not representing the Senate. She did it on her own. What she did was not binding on the Senate."

But Drilon said that there was no reason for the Senate to censure Madrigal.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the government should not be too paranoid about Madrigal's meeting with the NDF leaders, saying she was motivated by "her desire to help in the search for a lasting solution" to the 37-year insurgency.

Pimentel said there was nothing improper or criminal about Madrigal's meeting with Sison and Jalandoni, adding that threats to file charges against her smacked of the administration's "penchant for witch-hunting its political foes in its obsession to still criticisms."

With a report by TJ Burgonio

SENATE'S REP. Sen. Jamby Madrigal, who claims to have represented the Senate in her talks with National Democratic Front leaders, arrives to clarify everything.

JESS YUSON

Ping, Gringo group's join impeachment drive vs GMA

By Michael Lim Ubac

HONASAN

GROUPS IDENTIFIED with Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former Sen. Gregorio Honasan yesterday joined the impeachment drive against President Macapagal-Arroyo, saying all they were after were truth and justice.

Lacson's Be Not Afraid Movement and Honasan's Guardian International Brotherhood Federation Inc. led 11 anti-Arroyo groups in joining the growing list of complainants against the President.

Supporters of deposed President Joseph Estrada, led by the so-called "Erap 5" who were abducted and tortured by military intelligence agents in May, made a similar move on Tuesday.

The signatures of this week's complainants, along with those to be gathered in the next three weeks, will be attached to the fifth impeachment case set to be filed on July 24, when Congress opens.

The soon-to-be-filed case will cite grounds similar to those cited in the four impeachment cases filed last week by more than 200 concerned citizens, including former Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, Fr. Rolly de Leon, and human rights activists.

Bringing back honor

The Be Not Afraid Movement was founded in June 2005 at the outbreak of the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

Its chair, Ramon Pedrosa, said he signed the impeachment case "as a first stop in a long process that we hope would bring honor, sense of duty, and patriotism back to our country."

"Every constitutional institution that we have respected all these years have been prostituted by this administration—from the administration of justice to the collection of taxes, name it," he said.

Pedrosa, also the founding chair of the ant-Marcos August 21 Movement, expressed the belief that the country would not move forward without "truth and justice."

He drew attention to the "sense of frustration and of protest and anger" purportedly prevalent among 97 percent of the population, "as against the three percent of the so-called silent majority that would not want to rock the boat because they [are] comfortable in their zones."

Referring to the alleged cheating in the 2004 presidential polls, Pedrosa said the Arroyo administration was "a failure because the [electoral] process that brought it forward was itself a grand failure."

'We want the truth'

The Guardian International led by former Pagsanjan Mayor Abner Afuang said impeachment proponents were only after the truth.

"We are just passing by. We will all die, so we just want the truth," Afuang said.

Both Pedrosa and Afuang dissociated themselves from Lacson or Honasan, saying their groups' joining the impeachment drive against Ms Arroyo had not been sanctioned by the two opposition stalwarts.

Afuang said his group's loyalty was to the Constitution and not to any sitting President.

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OPINION

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Shocks

EDITORIAL

CHAIRMAN BENJAMIN ABALOS OF THE COMMISSION on Elections seems to take everyone for a fool. Reacting to reports that the Office of the Ombudsman was recommending the impeachment of Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra and the dismissal of all the members of the Bids and Awards Committee, Abalos declared that everything about the P1.3-billion contract with Mega Pacific was aboveboard. "No graft and corruption attended the process," he said Sunday. "I am very shocked with the recommendation to impeach Commissioner Borra. I am doubly shocked that they want to to include me."

The public is also shocked—by how Abalos can say such things with a straight face. Because if he speaks the truth, Abalos must be one of the very few truthful, honest and just men still around—and the most unfairly maligned. Two of the nation's highest institutions that looked into the transaction—the Supreme Court and the Senate—both concluded that the April 2003 contract for the supply of automated counting machines was tainted with fraud. In a decision handed down in January 2004, the Court said the Comelec officials committed a "glaring, grave abuse of discretion" when they approved the contract. "The Commission on Elections approved the assailed resolution and awarded the contract not only in clear violation of law and jurisprudence, but also in reckless disregard of its own bidding rules." Almost two years later in December 2005, the Senate blue ribbon committee found that the election officials had participated in an "anomalous bidding and procurement" process. It said the deal was "unparalleled in its brazen and unmitigated transgression of the generally accepted norms and standards of public bidding."

If the contract was perfectly legal as Abalos continues to claim, what were the justices and the senators denouncing as fraudulent and illegal? Were they perhaps hallucinating? Or were they just out to get Abalos and company for some mysterious reasons? Abalos should explain quickly because his credibility is eroding, if it isn't completely gone yet.

But who can blame Abalos for sticking to his tale about an honest deal? Up to this point, he probably feels invulnerable. He and his cohorts have ignored demands for their resignation by both the Senate and the Catholic bishops, and they remain secure in their positions. For over two years, the Ombudsman sat on an order of the Supreme Court to determine the culpability of the officials involved in the deal and tried to question the directive instead. And when it was told to deliver or face a citation for contempt, the Ombudsman hurriedly put together a set of recommendations that left unresolved the culpability of Abalos and other commissioners (with the exception of Borra), at least for now.

With its recommendations, the Ombudsman turned the concept of public accountability on its head. It recommended the dismissal and the filing of graft charges against all members of the Bids and Awards Committee as well as the forfeiture of their retirement benefits and their disqualification from public office. Borra, who was found to have been negligent in studying the committee's recommendations to prevent any irregularity or illegality in the bidding, was held liable for impeachment. As to the involvement of Abalos and the other commissioners—Florentino Tuason and the now retired Luzviminda Tancangco, Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion and Mehol Sadain—the Ombudsman said it still has to investigate further.

Here we have the government body, tasked with prosecuting cases of graft and corruption, bearing hard on directors and officials of lower rank while washing its hands in the case of Borra and postponing a decision regarding the involvement of the highest Comelec officials for now—and possibly for ever. If the Ombudsman will have its way, it will apply the full force of the law on those who recommended approval of the contract but it will lay its hands off those who signed it. All because of this novel theory being put forward by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez that officials of constitutional bodies enjoy immunity.

The Supreme Court should take another look at this case. First, to find out whether the Ombudsman's half-baked recommendations constitute substantial compliance with its order. Second, to see if the Ombudsman is undermining its own case. And third, to determine how it can make a reluctant public official like Gutierrez do her duty.

Between the Court and the Senate on one hand, and Abalos on the other, there's no contest as to whom people believe. But more than knowing the truth, the people want to see justice done.

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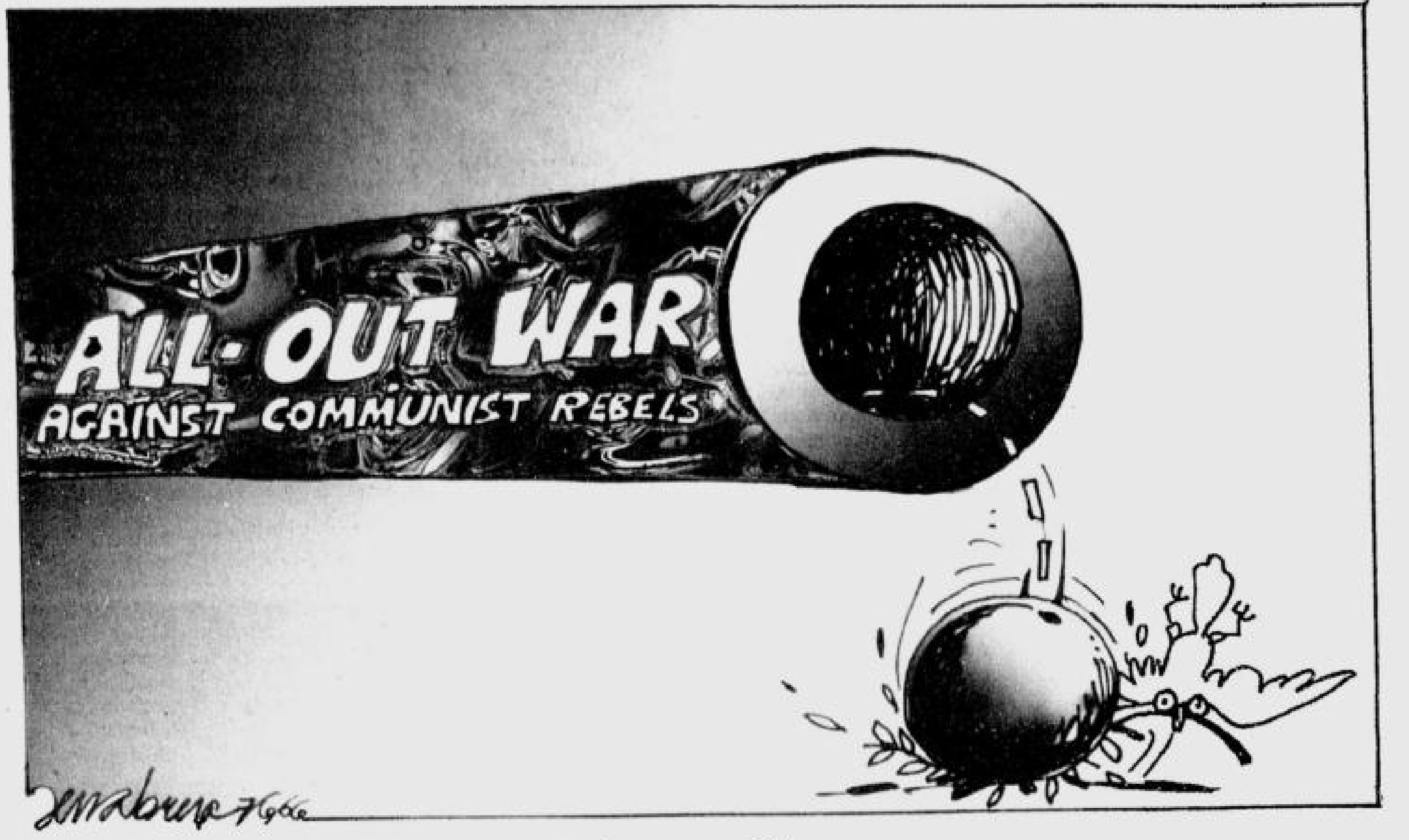


79 candles

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IMELDA MARCOS TRIGGERS A CONTROVERSY and her 77th birthday runs true to form. Has the "Iron Lady," some asked, escaped fraying at the edges, unlike most septuagenarians? Silly question. "Seventy is the sum of our years," the Psalmist writes. "Eighty if we are strong."

"People say I'm touched in the head," she told Time magazine in a pre-birthday interview. But the Marcos Foundation would soon unload its billions, the former First Lady said. "I'll come up with a project that will wipe out poverty here in two years."

So, will she wait for 79 candles on the birthday cake? "Help extended promptly is help doubled." She'd be cheered if she started with her frontyard—now.

In her home province of Leyte, 34 out of every 100 families are dirt poor, says the new National Statistics Coordination Board report. A full third lack clean water. Chronic hunger has resulted in 39 percent of kids, under 5, being scrawny and underweight. In human development, Leyte is wedged between Mongolia and Moldova.

There are today some 23.8 million Filipinos who scrounge below the poverty level of P34 a day, the NSCB report says. Tuberculosis incidence is 458 for every 100,000 Filipinos. It is 135 for Malaysians. Infant mortality is 35 for every 1,000. It is six in Brunei.

Our most fractured human right is what many neighboring countries take for granted, namely: the right of our children to celebrate their first birthdays.

The poor are to be ushered out of deprivation under the still-to-be-disclosed "project" that Imelda talks about. "Talk does not cook rice," a Chinese proverb says.

In contrast, American businessman Warren Buffet turned over $37 billion, of his $44 billion fortune, to the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation. That's equal to the gross domestic product of oil-rich Kuwait. It's to support work mainly in health and education.

With one signature, Buffet topped the top 10 giant benefactors: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, $28.8 billion; the United Kingdom's Wellcome Trust, $18.8 billion; Ford Foundation, $10.6 billion; J. Paul Getty Trust, $9.6 billion; Johnson Foundation, $8.9 billion, Lilly Endowment, $8.5 billion; Italy's Fondazione Cariplo, $8.2 billion; Monte del Pacshi Sienna, $7.1 billion; Kellog Foundation, $6.8 billion and Hewlett Foundation, $6.4 billion.

Never before has the world had so many billionaires. There were 691 of them last year, compared with 432 a decade back, Forbes magazine reports. Among others, they include: Indians Azin Premji and Nandan Delikani and Russia's Roman Abramovich.

A Johns Hopkins University survey shows that the top 10 countries in philanthropy, aside from Japan, are in the West. They set aside amounts ranging from 1.85 percent of the United States' GDP to 0.11 percent of Italy's. Despite its $73-a-barrel oil wealth, an Arab country still has to make that list.

That extra wealth is welcome. Never has had the world so many poor people as it has today. The important thing is to put this largesse to good use.

Increasingly, foundations are using better gauges for impact, as they shed amateurism to ensure impact and break out of dole lines that merely ease today's hunger pains. They seek innovative sustainable ways to raise living standards. The Philippine Business for Social Progress exemplifies this approach. And there is, of course, the insistence on greater transparency.

Imelda agrees. But the source and size of Buffet's fortune is known. Marcos' wealth remains secret. Buffet signed the check. All Imelda has ladled out are promises.

In fact, philanthropy by overseas Filipino workers is growing rapidly: over $218 million today from $45 million in 1999. They're doing far more than all those shell Marcos foundations—Vibur, Palmy, Spring Blizzard, Lazano, etc.—ever did. "*Ang hanap ni Bathala ay di salita kundi gawa*" (What God wants is not chatter but deeds), a Filipino proverb says.

So far, every centavo that Filipinos got from the Marcoses was squeezed through court decisions: from the $638 million seized from shell foundations abroad to the $36.4 million of seized Marcos wealth that a decision of the US District Court in Hawaii ordered to be paid to martial law victims.

"Religion has always a big part in giving," a new Economist survey on wealth and philanthropy points out. "Christians, Muslims, Jews arid Sikhs all traditionally aim to give away a set proportion of their income."

Historically, this has been a tenth of one's income. "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of hosts," the Book of Malachai reads. "Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessings upon you without measure?"

Skeptics snort that tax breaks for ego-trips meant blessing for some. And plenty can still go wrong. Nonetheless, there's more elbow room for those who would share with the more who go without.

And there is, for some, the nagging sense of mortality. "A funeral hearse has no baggage racks," John D. Rockefeller once said.

The "Millennium Development Goals," signed by over 170 countries—the Philippines included—already spells out what's needed: food, water, schools, reducing infant and maternal mortality, ecological stability. But these goals are difficult in a society where many are obsessed with "transporting gold to the grave."

As Chancellor Thomas More told Richard Rich, who betrayed him in exchange for a seedy fiefdom: "It profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world, Richard. But for Wales?"

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Cheap thrills

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I WISH WE'D HAVE SOME SENSE OF PROPORTION.

I mean I'm all for Manny Pacquiao trying to pick up another million dollars, which translates into P53 million (or haven't you noticed that the peso has climbed back to P53 to $1, something government has been keeping silent about as earnestly as it crowed about its getting to P51 to $1 some months ago?). Who wouldn't, particularly if it's easy money? We all can do with the extra dough, even if some of us are no longer poor. Indeed, even if some of us can't seem to have enough products to endorse.

Even the great Muhammad Ali wasn't beyond it, putting up a string of fights with nobodies, the better to pocket some loose change in the form of millions of dollars and showcase his skills without risk of soiling his pretty face. That was after his spectacular win over the invincible George Foreman the year before in Zaire. I remember in particular his fight with Chuck Wepner in 1975. Wepner was a patsy who rose through the ranks in the 1960s, fell into obscurity after losing several fights and racked up a string of wins and went up again. He got a crack at good money to fight Ali, but no one expected him to be anything more than meat for the meat grinder.

He surprised everyone by punishing Ali, who hadn't taken the fight seriously, sending him down on the canvas in the ninth. Wepner lost eventually, the fight being stopped in the 15th and ruled a technical knockout, but not after giving the champion a scare. Sylvester Stallone was among those who watched it, which inspired him to make "Rocky." The movie did far more magnificently than the fight, spawning several sequels. Ali himself would go on to rise again after this, indeed to greater heights with his bloody encounter with Joe Frazier, called the "Thrilla in Manila," which many consider to be the greatest boxing match of all time.

I was "thrill-ahed" when Pacquiao gave Marco Antonio Barrera a boxing lesson—so complete was his domination of him--some years back. I wasn't so sure he plucked out a draw from Juan Manuel Marquez, but thought to myself, well, maybe there's something to be said for decking a guy three times in one round even if you lose the rest of the fight. I felt pain when he lost to Erik Morales the first time around, Morales giving him a boxing lesson in turn. And I felt boundless joy, along with 84 million Filipinos, at his victory over Morales in the rematch, the ecstasy all the sweeter for the previous agony.

But Pacquiao-Larios? I felt embarrassed. I felt even more embarrassed by the aftermath.

Like I said, I don't mind that Pacquiao decided to pick up some cash, but I do mind that his fight with Larios would be billed as another "Thrilla in Manila." It was just another "Wasteland in Cleveland" without the surprise Wepner sprung on his audience, quite apart from his opponent. I do mind that Pacquiao keeps saying he is dedicating his victory to the Filipino people. If a diva dedicated "My Way" to me during my birthday, I'd feel sore too. I deserve better. She deserves better. A deciding match between Pacquiao and Morales, that would be another "Thrilla in Manila," or whichever "la" it is held. Or a Pacquaio-Marquez rematch: That should put to rest doubts about the epithet, "Mexican-Destroyer," one way or the other.

It's not just ABS-CBN to blame for making a mountain out of a molehill. Though speaking of mountains, ABS-CBN it was, too, that tried to turn our mountain-climbers' ascent into Mt. Everest into an achievement of epic proportions. I mean, I'm proud of it too, and the accomplishment is epic in the sense that our mountain climbers have done so amid the utter dispossession of support, moral and material, that they've always been heir to. But let's not squeeze from it more than it can yield. The path to the top of the world is not an unexplored one, it is a beaten one. We thump ourselves in the chest for it, we do not parade ourselves before the world, we embarrass ourselves before the world.

But ABS-CBN aside, what was that parade all over Manila, with Lito Atienza hanging on the coattails, or boxing shorts, of Pacquiao for dear life, all about? What the hell does "Champion for Life," which GMA, who would not be outdone, promptly conferred on Pacquiao, mean? For what? For beating an 11th-ranked journeyman desperately trying to make a buck in the ring and even more desperately eyeing an alternative career as a karaoke singer?

This sound-and-fury does not signify that the Filipino can do, it signifies that the Filipino can make do. It does not signify that the Filipino can make a saga of himself, it signifies that the Filipino can make a spectacle of himself. It does not signify that the Filipino has finally been filled by the spirit of aspiration, it signifies that the Filipino has finally been felled by the weight of desperation.

The last is particularly worth noting. The way we're going about it, we seem to have invented two new responses to life's challenges. Either we set for ourselves servile ambitions, and crow like roosters at the crack of dawn when we have achieved them. That isn't just seen in the way we celebrate Pacquiao's victory over Larios, calling ourselves champions. That is seen in the way we celebrate our doctors becoming nurses and invading the hospitals of England, calling ourselves "global." Or from the opposite end, like King Canute or Queen Gloria, we bid the waves to hold still, banishing all obstacles with the wave of the hand, proclaiming, *basta lang*, we will become an Enchanted Kingdom or First World country in 20 years, proclaiming, *basta rin lang*, that we have more than enough classrooms for the kids; and who is the education secretary to say otherwise?

Cheap thrills. And I'm not so sure they're cheap.

Jamby was naïve at the very least

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SOME SENATORS CONFESS THAT THEY OFTENtimes cannot understand Sen. Jamby Madrigal's explanations, as she tends to rely on PowerPoint presentations about abstract ideas that seem to go over their heads. Thus, they often emerge more confused from such sessions. But in the recent controversy over her unauthorized meeting with Jose Ma. Sison and Luis Jalandoni of the National Democratic Front in Utrecht and their signing of a joint communiqué, listing President Macapagal-Arroyo's "sins," including her all-out war against the New People's Army, and calling for her ouster by February 2007, Madrigal has confused the nation as well.

She seems also to be too eager to look politically sophisticated, when in reality she's just naïve. She appears too eager to get into the headlines on controversial issues, when the prudent thing for a neophyte, especially one with an elitist background, is to first keep a low profile as she goes through her political education.

* * *

Her protagonist, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, has fired a series of questions that she should answer forthrightly. With a tinge of sarcasm, Enrile demanded by what authority she met with the Utrecht-based communist leaders who are considered enemies of the state and terrorists abroad and signed a joint communiqué with them. Did she represent the republic or the Senate, her political party, her family or her social class or gender? asked Enrile, who sought a Senate investigation.

* * *

This act of holding an unauthorized meeting with enemies of the state demands at the very least a summons from the Senate ethics committee. On the other hand, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has said he's looking into the treason angle, "in case war breaks out with the rebels." Interestingly, however, the Senate, which is usually quick to investigate anything, won't call her to even just explain. Senate President Franklin Drilon has pooh-poohed Madrigal's meeting by saying that many other politicians have sought out the NDF leaders, notably Speaker Jose de Venecia. What he didn't say, however, was that JDV traveled to Utrecht and then Oslo to broker peace with the NDF, with express authority from the Arroyo administration. Since then a number of officials have gone to Utrecht, notably Tarlac Gov. Apeng Yap and former Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello III, for the peace process, but could not move it forward.

* * *

Based on reports, Madrigal's self-appointed mission appears to be in tandem with the opposition's goal of ousting GMA by forging a united front with the Left. It has become evident that even ranking opposition politicians can no longer distinguish between what's politically correct and what's not, or even what's seditious and treasonous. It seems they would go for anything so long as it holds promise of ousting GMA. It's a sad commentary on the kind of politicians we have. To think that there are people who still want to keep the Senate.

* * *

The recent Supreme Court ruling upholding Malacañang's authority over mining operations in Mt. Diwalwal in Compostela Valley virtually affirms the actions taken by former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez in 2002 to resolve the 20-year-old Diwalwal crisis. President Arroyo issued Proclamation 297 on Nov. 25, 2002, declaring the disputed gold rush area as a mineral reservation. It was the first time that a provision of RA 7942, or the Mining Act of 1995, which outlined government's "priority rights" over lands with vast natural resources, was tested.

* * *

In 2002, Diwalwal was a hotbed of conflict among big- and small-time miners. Things were threatening to get out of hand. Alvarez recommended that a portion of the area be set aside for small-scale miners, and in September of that year, he awarded 22 service contracts to some 2,000 small miners who organized themselves into cooperatives. This scheme was hailed as the "social justice program of GMA in Diwalwal" since it also addressed social equity issues such as the tenure of the small-scale miners, health and the deteriorating peace and order situation. The scheme fulfilled the provisions of RA 7076, the People's Small Scale Mining Act, which said that small-scale miners cannot be dislodged from their areas of operation if they have been there prior to 1987.

Big miners challenged the formula in the Supreme Court, but in upholding Malacañang's authority over mining operations in Diwalwal, the Court affirmed GMA's and Alvarez's action. It ruled that under the law, the government may, on its own, take over mining operations or enter into an agreement with any qualified entity. It said that "the exercise of this prerogative lies with the Executive Department over which the courts will not interfere."

* * *

Sadly, however, while the Alvarez formula for peace and social justice in Diwalwal was hailed, it became his swan song. Not long afterwards, the Palace succumbed to vested interests, among them the group led by Victoria Garchitorena, who was to turn against GMA on July 8, 2005, and the Alcantara family of Davao. GMA unceremoniously removed Alvarez from his post and replaced him with Garchitorena's candidate, Elisea Gozun, whose husband had worked for a long time with the Alcantara family. Gozun's first act was to rescind Department Administrative Order No. 17, which Alvarez had the guts to implement for the first time. The order sought to protect small fishermen by declaring areas 15 sq km from shore off-limits to trawl fishing.

Alvarez had dreamt of the emergence of a new middle class from the small-miners' reservation he sought to carve from Diwalwal, and the Court's recent ruling leaves him quite vindicated about its feasibility. But he also knows that the issue is "far from resolved. Small-scale miners continue to clamor for the win-win solution we enforced in 2002. That must now be enforced."

How much for a drink of urine?

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

HOW MUCH WOULD IT BE FOR WILFREDO QUIjano who was made to drink urine ("I don't know whose urine it was," he said) and who spent his 17th birthday and nine birthdays after that in prison?

How much should Paula Romero, a former seamstress, receive for her missing son Henry, a newspaperman at the time of his disappearance?

How much for the 34-year-old woman in Mindanao who woke up one night to find her house being set on fire by some 15 armed men, who then stabbed to death her husband in front of her? How much for her own 10 stab wounds? This woman bled till morning and was still clasping her six-month-old baby when help came. Her 5-year-old child ran for his life and called for help. When the village people came, it was already morning but the woman was still alive. I interviewed her many years ago.

How do you put a price tag on the pain of Purificacion Viernes, a health worker from Mindanao whose husband and two children were killed in 1984, by armed men who came in the dead of night and strafed the Vierneses' home, on suspicion that they were rebel sympathizers? The next thing Purificacion saw were brain tissues and blood splattered all over. Her two children died instantly and she heard her husband breathe his last.

Purificacion played dead when the armed men came up to inspect the place. The men took a look at her and decided to pump one more bullet into her to make sure she was dead. As if that was not enough, a soldier clicked his cigarette lighter and ran its flame on the soles of Purificacion's feet. To see if she would move. She did not, and they left her.

Purificacion survived to tell her story. One of her legs was suspended in mid-air when I interviewed her in a hospital. Another one was heavily bandaged. The soles of her feet were swollen.

So how much is Purificacion's share of the Marcos billions? How do you put a price tag on her wounds, her dead husband and sons, the burns on her feet?

I had to scour my "Forever Files" to search for stories like these. I wrote the above in this space 12 years ago in 1994. That was after a US court ruled that $1.2 billion in damages was to be awarded to the almost 10,000 martial rule victims who filed a class suit against the Marcos estate.

I also wrote then that the Ramos government stood in the way. Its stand then was that the Marcoses' immense wealth should go back to the government because it was stolen from the government. And so it should not be used to indemnify the victims of Marcos rule.

Nine years ago in 1997, I again wrote about the victims' hopes nearing realization when the US Supreme Court affirmed with finality a 1995 district court ruling in Honolulu. The claimants' lead counsel Robert Swift said the Marcoses had no further right of appeal under US law. In 1995 the US Supreme Court already upheld a lower court's ruling on $1.2 billion in exemplary damages. In both the class action and direct action, plaintiffs had clearly won. There was also the $772 million in compensatory damages. These figures and suits could be confusing but just think of a total of $2 billion.

The things you could do with $2 billion, I wrote then. Of course, you do not divide that equally into 10,000. Victims are classified into three general types. But it goes without saying that you cannot quantify suffering and loss. It was not the prospect of money that pushed the 10,000 claimants to file a class suit for compensation. It was justice for 10,001 crimes.

But will the government let go? Silvestre Bello III, solicitor general at that time, said the government was "inclined to lay off claim to the Marcos Swiss fund." Good, I wrote, the government should then step aside and allow the 10,000 victims to get the $2 billion. A big portion of the amount was to come from the frozen assets in Switzerland. Imagine all that money pouring in. That would be much more than what was being sent by Filipino overseas contract workers slaving away in foreign lands.

But it seemed the victims were never going to see the color of that money because the government kept standing in the way. If the government succeeds in snatching that money from the victims, I said then, a curse will be upon this land. Why? The $2 billion might only line a few big pockets. Maybe it will find its way to the national budget and then to the pork barrel, to government projects and offices and the sticky hands of the corrupt. While if the amount were spread around to victims it would go a along way—for education, housing, health, seed capital, etc.

Well, so much has already been recovered and where did these go? Not a cent for the victims. *Wala, kahit isang singkong duling.*

It is now 2006. Last month, the US District Court of Hawaii sent a notice to 9,539 claimants. The letter gave a background saying: "Following trials in 1992, 1994 and 1995, the Court entered Final Judgment on Feb. 3, 1995 in favor of the Class in the amount of US$1,964,000,000. Your claim is one of the 9,539. The Judgment was affirmed by the US Appeals Court, and is now final." It also tackled collection proceedings, distribution of the fund, eligibility of class members, attorney's fees and expenses.

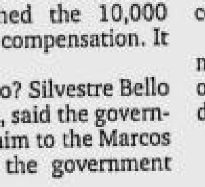
Last week the District Court of Hawaii authorized compensation of $2,000 each to about 7,500 victims (why fewer now?) of human rights abuses. The US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals awarded the victims $35 million in a New York brokerage account that once belonged to the Marcoses.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) is again standing in the way. We call on the spirit of the late PCGG chair Haydee Yorac, defender of human rights, to be the mediatrix.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Complicity's price



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

I'M NOT CONVINCED THAT AIRING THE VIDEOtape which showed Gen. Danilo Lim withdrawing support from President Macapagal-Arroyo and asking her to recognize a new government, serves the interest of the Palace. This is not to say that Malacañang doesn't think so: civilian officials (themselves formerly with the military or police) in the Palace are crowing over the airing of the tape. They think that the tape proves, to their satisfaction, that their repression of the public was justified; it suggests that the country came within a hair's breadth of becoming a military dictatorship; it distracts the public from all the other things going on.

However, the tape serves to emphasize a couple of things that Palace officials have been aware of since February this year: first, the width and depth of military dissatisfaction with the administration (which has astounded them); second, to stay in power, they have to make a devil's bargain with the top brass of the armed forces. While the bureaucracy is purportedly still in the hands of the defense secretary, it isn't the civilians who dictate, much less limit, what's going on in the field. The tape underscores the division within the military, and the reason for that division; it emphasizes how alienated from the larger population the administration is.

What else did Lim's video prove? The Armed Forces chief of staff says it proves nothing, since it was never "official"—by which, I suppose, he means that it was never aired, and thus, did not become a public act subject to official punishment: there is a whale of a difference between intent and action. (If someone writes an angry letter calling for revolution but doesn't publish it, can the act of writing be punished?) It may be so; and it is probably safer—if the brittle authority of senior generals is to be preserved—to say this is so.

It does serve as a reminder that Lim was, at that time (last February), situated where many Filipinos were. He was so frustrated and so devoid of hope of any change, that any solution seemed worth it. That Lim (who may have shown an inflated sense of self-importance by making that tape and engaging in whatever else he's accused of), or those who, frustrated as he was, propped him up (or were, in Lim's mind, ripe to command) hadn't thought things through, can only been seen in retrospect—there were enough military officers with misgivings about taking over the rein of powers, and a sufficient public backlash at the idea of military rule. It is only in retrospect, too, that a kind of divine providence can be said to have been at work: perhaps better a continuing purgatory under Ms Arroyo than a fledgling post—a GMA regime led by individuals like Gen. Jovito Palparan. After all, neither Lim nor any active senior officer, to my mind, has expressed misgivings over the military's all-out war policy versus the New People's Army.

But the larger issue here, I'd suggest, is how it's becoming clearer and clearer that so many were complicit in assuring Ms Arroyo's "victory" at all costs, that they cannot afford to turn their backs on her now—notwithstanding the personal, emotional, or spiritual pangs their "loyalty" has cost them; never mind all the ideals they previously stood for.

A general, colonel, or major has to recognize that the disagreements within their ranks stem from the treatment of officers who helped "re-elect" Ms Arroyo: if there wasn't outrage over their act, the dilemma of whether to topple or support an unpopular administration wouldn't even exist.

And the same applies to every other prop of the present dispensation. At the rate this is going, it may have been possible that spiritual justifications were given: it is all right to cheat, so long as it prevents a larger evil, say, the victory of Fernando Poe Jr.

Many sectors, whose post-Edsa dedication to democracy has been shattered twice, apparently wish to scuttle democracy and replace it with something that is more to their liking.

And what is that? A "guided" democracy, which is a democracy purged of that great evil (in their minds, at least) known as "populism"—democracy where the majority of the population does not have any influence in policymaking, or any participation in selecting those who would hold public offices. As Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman once famously quipped, "Vox populi? Vox humbug!" Stripped to its essential attributes, the foundation of the present administration's and its allies' survival strategy is: we cannot trust a people who do not trust us. Therefore, limit and circumscribe the tyranny of the majority. Our great problem today is that they would institute a tyranny of the minority: of men of the cloth, men in uniform, men in the House, the Palace, the boardrooms of society, the social and professional clubs; yes, a minority but loud enough to rely on the typical Filipino's propensity to avoid outright divisions at all costs, though the divisions be fundamental and important.

If there's a Lim, there's an Esperon—which keeps the Sengas of this world equivocal and ultimately, at bay. For every Bishop Capalla, there is a Bishop Cruz—which keeps the other prelates intent on keeping peace within the episcopacy, though the result is to leave their flocks adrift. For every civil society group opposed, there is one against their opposition; and so on. The reality, though, is that in condemning those it claims are antidemocratic, the administration only postpones the eventual exposure of a conclusion it has reached long ago—a conclusion which has led it and its supporters, to fundamentally dismiss the idea that democracy is worth preserving.

World Cup dream

YOUNG BLOOD

Mark Anthony S. Goroy

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY GREATEST DREAM WAS TO play and win the World Cup. I thought no other experience could be more fulfilling than being the main attraction in this quadrennial spectacle watched by millions of passionate fans all over the world. The World Cup is such a momentous event that some countries consider even just qualifying as a historic achievement that is almost as significant as winning independence.

The current World Cup has for its theme "A time to make friends." Franz Beckenbauer, president of the World Cup 2006 organizing committee and one of Germany's greatest players of all time, said the theme, aside from presenting his country as a cordial host, emphasizes the fact that football is not just a game of 22 hirelings kicking a leather ball but it also offers an opportunity for individuals to exchange stories and share their lives.

I couldn't agree more. It was my eight friends from Grade 5, who are still my best buddies until now, who led me to the sport that almost became my religion. The scene is clearer to me now than my first Communion. It was one humid afternoon when my friends described their scrimmage during their first practice session for our school's football team. One bragged about how he had run the flanks and delivered a cross. Another boasted that his tackle was one of the highlights of the day. And still another claimed that he almost made a goal with a strike inside the penalty box.

These stories struck me back as boring and uneventful. What's so significant about a cross or a strike or a tackle if you didn't score and make your team win? But for the first time in my life, I couldn't say anything to my friends—the same friends I had since prep school—and I felt like an outsider. They were so engrossed by their exploits that every detail seemed new to them even if they were being related for the nth time. So the very next day, I looked for my most durable sneakers and joined my friends in practice. That proved to be one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

Football not only added another entry on my hobby list. It also provided me with new occasions to meet people and make new friends. I can say that aside from the classes, my grade-school and high-school football teams were the organizations that gave me a lot of friends. Which was rather inevitable since my teammates were the persons I interacted with every afternoon after class. It was with them that I shared the exhaustion of practice, the joy of victory, the agony of defeat and the reproaches of our trainers.

When I entered college, football took a backseat owing to the demands of academic life and the lack of friends who played the game since all of my teammates decided to study in Negros. I was resigned to the possibility that I would not be able play football again, until a fellow dormer saw me juggling the ball in a vacant room of our dorm. Immediately, he invited me to play with him and his friends from their high school alma mater near the university campus.

I was so delighted after the game not so much because I was able to play again after a year-long hiatus, but because I made some new friends very easily. I was able to join them for a few more games, until we left our dormitory to give way to a new batch of freshmen. But even though I could not take part in their games again, I was able to maintain our friendship. Until now we find time to exchange notes about our academic and private lives and football, of course.

My encounter with my dorm mate was not the last time football broadened my horizon. Football has not only helped me find new friends but also keep their friendship. Once I joined a work camp, a social outreach program organized by a non-government organization held in Naga City, together with about 20 other guys from different universities all over the country. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that most of them played football and that our camp chaplain was also an enthusiast, following his stay in Spain. So every afternoon for the next two weeks, after helping construct a footpath, landscaping and cleaning the drainage, all of us would summon all our remaining energy in order to play football. Our work became more fun because while working we are discussing the plays we made and looking forward to the next game. The game allowed us to know each other more deeply.

Football has also given me opportunities to reach out to others. When I gave optional religious instructions to a group of male sophomores of a high school, I broke their stereotype of catechists as people who didn't care about the world and didn't know how to have fun. I did it by playing football with them after our sessions. This made them feel at ease. During our games, I showed them that I was not just a catechist but also their friend.

Through football, I have kept in constant touch with people who might not have become my friends had I not decided to join our grade-school football team. These are people with whom I share a "common life." Some of them are true friends whom I consider my alter ego. They don't hesitate to correct me when I do something wrong. This, to me, is a sign of true friendship: to risk being called a meddler rather than allow a friend to do foolish things. For true friendship is always grounded on truth and seeks the good of the other. When "friends" do the opposite, they become accomplices.

Now I know that sharing a "common life" with friends is as fulfilling as winning the World Cup.

Mark Anthony S. Goroy, 21, is a 5th year BS Industrial Engineering student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

THEY SAID

Society's daughter

"The day she joined the movement, she was no longer our daughter. She was the daughter of the society at large. She had a role to play in society."

— "Molly," on her 20-year-old daughter "Erika," who quit school to go underground. Erika was killed last March when government troops overran reportedly a New People's Army camp in Bicol

Unstoppable

"It does not matter to me how many thousands or millions of *cobradores* (bet collectors) they get (to arrest). This thing will not stop unless they get that *jueteng* lord."

—Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca's challenge to the Philippine National Police to go after a suspected gambling lord named Jun Roque

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Becoming like the enemy

FOCUSING MILITARY STRIKES on rebels is a dangerously unbalanced strategy because it ignores the root causes of insurgency, as pinpointed by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon: poverty, social injustice, graft and corruption. Failing to address these issues is like filling a water tank that's full of holes.

Long-term problems require long-term solutions. The two-year deadline can only lead to one chilling end: genocide.

As a student of history, I am against everything communism stands for. I believe, however, that even leftist sociopaths deserve due process. To deny their human rights is to lose the moral high ground. If we become like the enemy, then we would have lost.

The government's greatest enemy is within. The good news is, it also holds the key to the insurgency problem. It's a two-way street: a *ningas-cogon* bloodbath; or a strategic, long-term, non-partisan, comprehensive and realistic master plan to end poverty, social injustice, graft and corruption, backed solidly by political will, wise leadership and the rule of law. Which way to go is the judgment call of the Arroyo administration.

—JONATHAN AQUINO,
clearwater_1129@yahoo.com

Unscientific but reliable quake 'precursors'?

I READ THE INQUIRER'S EDITORIAL on earthquakes. ("Preparedness," PDI, 5/30/06) Indeed, to this day, modern science is still incapable of predicting, much less preventing earthquakes. However, the editorial went on to say that Japanese scientists "have settled the question of predictability of earthquakes. 'Earthquakes follow a pattern. They have detectable precursors.' The government would do well to send the country's earthquake experts to Japan to learn from its scientists."

While waiting for our government to move toward this direction, I would like to offer my two-centavos' worth on "earthquake precursors," if one could call them as such. They may be a crude way of detecting the arrival of earthquakes, but others have also noticed these "indicators" in the past before the "big ones" struck.

In our backyard, my wife kept two large hogs in cramped pig pens. She dutifully pampered them with hog feeds and loving care, which made them very docile, quiet, indolent and gluttonous. One day, they suddenly became restless, to the point of almost being violent as they made several attempts to break out of their pens. They groaned intermittently and produced a hissing sound the whole day. On the second day, at mid-afternoon of July 16, 1990, amid their restlessness and groaning, a "big one" struck with a 6.8 intensity.

In early August 1993, my wife and I immigrated to the Island of Guam, staying in our son's home in the US Navy Housing Area in Barrigada Heights. We have not been one week on the island when I woke up one morning to find a number of sticky, short earthworms crawling up the bungalow walls and aiming for the roof. I quickly swept them all away with a long-handled broom. I asked my son if, in his three-year stay in Guam, he ever noticed this phenomenon before. His reply was an emphatic no.

On the second day, there were hundreds more crawling slowly up. On the third day, thousands of them covered the entire bungalow walls and it took me the whole morning sweeping them down, but many had already settled atop the roof. Then, at around 5:30 p.m., a "big one" struck with an 8.0 intensity, violently shaking the whole island for almost 60 seconds.

I am just wondering if the strange behavior of those animals before the two earthquakes struck could be considered as some sort of crude "precursors," but enough to prepare all of us for impending earthquakes—while we wait for our government to contact the Japanese earthquake scientists.

—DANIEL H. DIZON,
2 Badjao Rd., Villa Gloria,
2009 Angeles City, Pampanga

Opposition happy with the spate of bombings

IF SENATORS RODOLFO BIAZON and Aquilino Pimentel do not want the Arroyo administration to blame the "legitimate opposition" for the bombings in the Philippines, then they should stop being happy whenever these bombings happen. ("Stop blaming opposition for blasts—solons," PDI, 6/16/06)

I rarely hear members of the opposition condemning these bombings. And if they do speak against these horrific acts, they editorialize it with, "That just shows how people are dissatisfied with the Arroyo administration." Every self-righteous expression of indignation from them has a slant of malice to sow the seeds of strife.

Former President Corazon Aquino can only offer to recite the rosary for the bombing victims. Running priest Robert Reyes can only run for them.

To the other members of the "legitimate opposition," thank you for pouring flammable acid into the wound.

—GEO ALCALA,
48 Sifeng Road, Jiamusi City,
Heilongjiang, China

Why medicines are expensive here

WE ALL COMPLAIN WHY medicines cost so much here. That's because we follow the American way of marketing drug products—through promotion and advertisement. Just visit a doctor in a hospital and take note how many medical or drug representatives visit him every day and how many samples of medicines, catalogues and promotional items and incentives they offer him.

All these "reps," judging from the way they dress, definitely earn decent incomes from the pharmaceutical companies they represent, and their incomes and standard of living have to be supported by the companies. To recover these overheads, the pharmaceutical companies simply tuck the costs in the price of medicines. But all this is nothing compared to the incentives they offer doctors to promote their products.

Would you believe they offer doctors all-expenses-paid trips to places in Asia, Europe, Africa or the United States—and with their families yet? Somebody has to pay for all these expenses and unfortunately it is the consumer. And we wonder why medicines are expensive here!

These practices are very common in the United States but unheard of in India and Pakistan where medicine prices, like cosmetics and food products, have to be labeled with an MRP (maximum retail price), determined by the government.

If we could implement this practice, we could surely bring down the prices of our medicines here. But then again, we need a trusted government body to determine what the right price should be.

—SURESH KARNANI,
tejas@mydestiny.net

Nursing leakage alarming

WE, MEMBERS OF THE NURSING profession, express our concern over the reported leakage in the June 2006 nurses' board examination. It was reported that "the leakages could not have been perpetrated without the active participation or negligence [of any or all the] members" of the Board of Nursing. (PDI, 6/23/06)

We believe that the members of the Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) and the Board of Nursing (BON) should be models of utmost integrity in administering licensure examinations for nurses; therefore, they should discharge their duties honestly and faithfully.

We urge the PRC to immediately create an independent body to conduct a swift, impartial and public investigation of the reported leakage.

We also urge the PRC to withhold the release of the results of the board examination pending this investigation.

We collectively uphold the principles of academic excellence, integrity, professional responsibility and service to the people.

We call on the PRC and the Commission on Higher Education, which are legally mandated to oversee and regulate nursing education in the country, to strictly implement the provisions of the Nursing Law on standards for nursing education. We strongly believe that this incident is but a manifestation of the country's deteriorating, highly commercialized nursing education—the result of the proliferation of nursing schools and review centers.

We consider this a matter of prime urgency, and we hope that due process will be observed here; and, if warranted, the necessary cases filed against all those who are directly involved in this irregularity.

We commit ourselves to the quest for truth and we will pursue this case to the end in the name of justice and safe nursing practice.

—JOSEFINA TUAZON,
dean, UP College of Nursing and
22 other signatories
from the nursing profession

State responsible for rights violations

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST that "the House of Representatives passed on second reading a bill allocating P8 billion in ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses as compensation for victims of human rights abuses under the martial law regime of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos." (PDI, 6/7/06)

Being one of the 9,539 documented human rights victims of martial law myself who won a $2-billion class suit against the Marcoses in Hawaii in 1995, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and congratulations. to our congressmen, particularly Rep. Etta Rosales, the principal author of the bill.

Certainly, the bill will benefit the human rights victims of martial law and, to paraphrase Rosales herself, will make the State realize that it is responsible and accountable for human rights violations.

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR,
vice mayor,
Pagsanjan, Laguna

Time to appoint a DepEd secretary

FOLLOWING EDUCATION SECRETARY Florencio B. Abad's resignation last July 8, 2005, the Department of Education, the biggest department in the government bureaucracy, has been headed by Dr. Fe A. Hidalgo in an acting capacity. Nevertheless, she has demonstrated her ability to lead the DepEd and improve the country's educational system.

What's keeping the Arroyo administration from appointing a permanent secretary for the DepEd? The time is more than ripe for this vital department to be headed by a full-fledged secretary.

—EUSEBIO S. SAN DIEGO,
founding president,
Teachers Alliance Against
Graft and Corruption (Tagac),
22 Antonia St., Centerville,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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'Lukayo' TV docu disturbs villagers

"LUKAYO" performers in colorful dresses and "crazy" makeup pose with Adelaida Pasco (left), 67, who stopped dancing in the ritual when she got sick.

PHOTOS BY ROMULO PONTE

By Romulo Ponte
Kalayaan, Laguna

UNTIL AN AILMENT FORCED HER TO QUIT, 67-YEAR-OLD Adelaida Pasco had been known in her community in Sitio Magalulon, Barangay San Antonio, 15 km from the town proper of Kalayaan in Laguna, as one of the longest performing "*lukayo*" dancers.

And until an audio-visual documentary on the *lukayo* was shown nationwide on television, she had not been disturbed by the ritual, traditionally held during weddings, in her village.

Pasco used to dance, after a wedding ceremony, with an eggplant hanging between her legs as a way of wishing that the couple would have an offspring soon. The eggplant is supposed to symbolize the groom's sex organ.

The tradition has been practiced as far back as when her late parents were married in 1917, Pasco said.

"In the past, we only brought a *bilao* (a shallow basket used to winnow rice), to represent the guitar, and a broom which we placed in between our legs," she said in Filipino. Through the years, however, the dancers' props have evolved into the use of eggplants.

ESTELA Cabillas, 60, with her "batuta."

"*Lukayo*" is derived from "*luka-luka kayo*" (you are all crazy), referring to the local womenfolk, normally garbed in loose cotton dresses but would don *fashionista* clothes while performing the fertility dance like mannequins striding on a catwalk. Their faces were also made up with a riot of colors.

The "crazy" dancers would accompany the newly married couple from the church to Magalulon, where the ritual would continue.

Pasco said the ceremony included other activities like a brief dramatization of a supposed hostage-taking of the newlyweds by the *lukayo* women, who would playfully hide them from their waiting parents and godparents in a store.

The couple was supposed to be freed only with the "payment" of a ransom of one bottle of liquor, snacks or other food servings.

Sometimes, a doll was brought out during the ritual to comically reveal that the bride had a child before marriage, said some villagers.

Ridiculous as the dancers' costumes may seem and quite absurd the role-playing, the *lukayo* women have become a source of entertainment for the newlyweds, their guests and relatives.

The event throws the guests and villagers into raptured laughter and merriment and "we forget some of our problems," Pasco said.

Wooden phalluses

Pasco said she was disturbed when she saw I-Witness, a late-night public affairs show on GMA 7, that featured the episode titled "Lukayo: Hindi Ito Bastos! (This is Not Obscene)" on May 22.

Instead of eggplants, she saw the *lukayo* women wielding wooden or artificial phalluses sculpted in various sizes.

"When we used to do it, there was no malicious display of anything blatantly offensive to the people's sight," said the elderly woman, who has 15 children.

The episode, presented by Howie Severino with National Artist Ramon Obusan as a primary source, prompted the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to suspend I-Witness for two weeks on July 3 and 10.

In a mobile phone interview on June 24, Severino said Obusan had earlier showed him some video footage of the ritual and these convinced him that it was worth covering.

He and his crew interviewed some residents, he said, and he got the impression that somehow the showing of wooden penises was already practiced long ago. But he admitted that those he interviewed made mention of "*talong*" as an early ritual instrument.

Severino quoted Obusan as saying that the display of wooden penises during the ceremony was already practiced in the past, but that this had gradually disappeared. The artist purportedly suggested to the *lukayo* performers to use them anew for the documentary.

Severino suggested an interview with Kalayaan village head, Froilan Reyes, who organized the people involved in the ceremony that was documented by the TV crew.

"When we went back to the area for the second wedding without Obusan, they still used wood (wooden penises). We did not tell them to use wood," Severino explained.

Artist's impression

On Monday, Obusan's assistant Marciano Biri said the national artist had interviewed an old woman, one of the oldest *lukayo* dancers, who had been keeping a wooden penis which she claimed she inherited from her parents.

This, according to Biri, gave Obusan the impression that the practice of displaying wooden phalluses was an old *lukayo* tradition.

Biri apologized that Obusan could not be available to comment as he had just come out of the hospital.

But through Biri, Obusan conveyed that his "job was to record what he has seen and researched" in the community. Like Severino, he suggested that Reyes, the village chair who helped them in preparing the video, be asked to clarify.

On Sunday, Reyes said he had told San Antonio parish priest Rodolfo Carabuena that the wooden phalluses used by the fertility dancers were produced by Obusan who, according to the village chair, distributed them to the women for use in the documentary.

Through Biri, Obusan replied that the villagers maybe just avoiding the controversy.

Church, villagers react

Bishop Leo M. Drona of the Diocese of San Pablo Don Bosco said the I-Witness episode was not faithful to the true and genuine culture of the villagers.

Drona said there had been a gross abuse of the tradition of the people of San Antonio. "A merely symbolic ritual (use of *talong*) was turned into a glaring display of wooden penises," he said.

In an interview on Monday, Carabuena echoed the concerns of the villagers, who were disturbed by the depiction of their ritual by the documentary team.

An unidentified *lukayo* member, who has been a parish catechist for the past three years, had asked for his advice if the ritual was contrary to her apostolate.

The priest said she did not violate anything because the tradition was merely for village entertainment and for legitimate purposes.

"*Pasayaw-sayaw lang po ako sa parada para sa katuwaan at hindi talaga ako humahawak ng ginagawang ari ng lalake* (I only dance during the parade for sheer fun but I don't really handle a male organ)," she quipped.

Immoral act?

Fr. Boyet Siddayao, who served as San Antonio parish priest for about six years, said he had never noticed his parishioners practicing such a bizarre ritual.

Farmer Rodolfo Acueza, 56, a resident of Magalulon, attested that eggplants were used in the past, but recently he saw wooden phalluses being brandished around in the parade.

"It's immoral that even the 'male organ' is now being held by females in the parade," Acueza said.

He said the wooden phalluses might have been introduced about a year ago.

In an interview late last month, Nelia Astrera, 65, a *lukayo* performer, said she joined the ceremony for sheer fun and to help the newly married couple pray for a happy life. But she said, "I am ashamed at times when the group becomes so exaggerated in their actions."

Estela Cabillas, 60, the band majorette and newest *lukayo* member, said her children allowed her to join the ritual but gave a stern warning not to hold any vulgar object. Hence, she said, she was contented with holding only a wooden "*batuta*" (nightstick).

Gerlyn Acueza, 31, who has three sons, admitted that the ritual was performed during her marriage with Sonny Acueza, 33.

When her children get married, she said she would encourage them to have the ritual as well, if their brides' families would agree. "The ceremony gave us so much fun and the day was full of delight. Nobody was gloomy during our wedding day," she said.

(The author is a diocesan priest of the Our Lady of Nativity's Parish in Pangil, Laguna. He has been an INQUIRER *correspondent since 1999. –Ed.)*

Navy SEALs ready to crush insurgents

By Marlon Ramos
Sangley Point, Cavite City

MIXED EMOTIONS SWEPT Benarlyn Inocencio when she arrived at the naval base in Sangley Point, Cavite City, to attend the graduation ceremonies of the Philippine Navy SEALs (Sea, Air and Land) on June 21.

Seaman Second Class (SN2) Reynaldo Panis Jr., her boyfriend of two years, was one of the 21 graduates of the special course for the SEALs, touted as the most special elite unit in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Although happy that Panis had fulfilled his dream of becoming a soldier, she was worried about what might happen to him after the government declared a full-scale war to end the communist insurgency.

"He said he wanted to prove something to himself. So I will just support him," the 18-year-old lass from Cavite City said.

Panis' father, Reynaldo Sr., also had the same thoughts.

"Although we take pride in what he has done, the anxiety is there. But he has to do his tasks to serve the country," said the proud father, himself a former soldier.

High morale

Panis, at 28 the youngest in the class, said their nine months of extraordinary training had prepared him and the others to overcome their fear.

"Fear is always there, but you need to overcome it," he said in Filipino.

In less than a month, their group will be sent to different areas in Mindanao to combat the rebels.

Lt. Victor Ramos, the group's team leader, said all of them were ready to respond to the call of President Macapagal-Arroyo to crush the communist insurgency within two years.

He said their morale was high after the President announced an additional P1 billion to the government's campaign against the New People's Army (NPA).

"This is what we wanted, to be warriors [for the people]. We're conditioned to undertake the tasks ahead of us. We're very excited," Ramos said.

Elite unit

Lt. Senior Grade Cris Sergio, commanding officer of Unit 6 of the SEALs, said the group's ability to conduct operations in different terrain using unconventional warfare makes the unit a force to reckon.

"Our spirits are high. My men and I are very excited. With the support that the government has given us, we're ready to go. It's fight, fight, fight," Sergio said.

The SEALs, also known as the Naval Special Operations Group (Navsog), are trained to conduct operations on sea, air and land.

"Unlike the Marines and the Scout Rangers, the SEALs operate in small units, usually made up of eight persons. We can even operate with only two men," he explained.

Of the AFP's over 100,000 personnel, less than a thousand are SEALs. Sergio said the rigors of the training make it impossible for others to make it to the elite team.

The SEALs usually use commando-style raids and attack at night when they are at their best, Sergio said.

NAVY SEALs personnel join a mock assault at Sangley Point.

EDWIN BACASMAS

They are also known to stay sleepless for days during special operations in an area.

Most of their missions are classified; only the top military officials know about their operations.

It is said that members of the Navy Seals were actually the ones who killed notorious Abu Sayyaf leader and spokesperson Abu Sabaya during one of their operations in Mindanao two years ago.

Sergio said their delicate missions also allowed them to use the most advanced firearms and war gadgets that the military have.

For one, the SEALs have radios which can be used under water. These communications gadgets were given to the military by their US counterpart and were presented to the media before the graduation rites on June 19.

The group also employs some of the most prolific and accurate snipers of the military.

It has experts in handling and planting high-impact explosives within enemy lines without being detected.

With these, Sergio said the members were confident that they can respond and contribute immensely in crushing the NPA.

Rigid training

The training principles of the SEALs were taken from the training book of the highly regarded US Seals. Some of the instructors were likewise trained by American SEALs.

Training includes airborne exercises, reconnaissance work, ordnance handling and scuba diving.

For nine months, the soldiers must wake up at 4 a.m. and stay awake up to the wee hours to carry out the tasks given them. They swim for two miles every day and run 10 km.

The soldiers are made to do a 27-km swim from Roxas Boulevard in Manila to the naval base in Sangley Point without any rest.

They also undergo "Hell Week," a week-long training where they are not allowed to sleep even for a minute, and "Hell Blast," in which they are given alcoholic beverages and given tasks while drunk.

"It is at their worst condition and state of mind where good soldiers stand out from the rest. It is at their worst condition when we can get the best from them," Sergio said.

Only 21 of the 79 applicants were able to finish the course, he said.

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Week of fighting displaces 16,000

A WEEK OF FIGHTING BETWEEN MORO GOVernment militiamen and separatist rebels in Maguindanao have left at least 10 dead and displaced at least 16,000 civilians, an official said.

Official military reports on the ground say three fighters from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and seven pro-government militiamen have been killed since last week, said government peace negotiator Ramon Santos.

The rebels claimed killing dozens of militiamen and soldiers in the attacks on security posts manned by Army-trained paramilitary forces in Maguindanao, which touched off battles with the military.

The MILF said the attacks were in retaliation for an earlier military shelling of a rebel training base on the outskirts of the town of Shariff Aguak.

Relief goods were being rushed to villages, as local and international negotiators tried to prevent the skirmishes from spreading, Santos said.

Santos said the situation had eased, and that both sides allowed relief workers to bring in food and supplies to some 16,000 people displaced by the fighting.

"Compared to last week, it has greatly stabilized although there are still fighting, there are still skirmishes on the ground," Santos told reporters, adding that MILF rebels were dug in trenches.

The MILF has warned that the fighting could set back peace negotiations aimed at ending their 28-year rebellion for an independent Islamic state in Mindanao.

Negotiators from the MILF and the government assisted by international monitors from Islamic countries are now investigating the clashes, Santos said.

"This has not shaken the whole peace process," Santos said.

The government's chief peace negotiator Jesus Dureza said he was to fly to the area of conflict on Thursday to check on relief work and to talk to rebel leaders.

At least 780 Muslim families are, however, trapped in a village in Shariff Aguak, according to a social welfare official, quoting reports from peace monitors.

"They are at risk. Our social workers can't penetrate the area because fighting is still ongoing," said Ruby Sahali, secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (DSWD-ARMM).

An official of a nongovernment organization with funding from the United States said the group was worried over 30 solar power modules in Tapikan town.

"Millions have been invested there for the people. We hope that the fighting stops," said Ces Rodriguez, information officer of the Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy.

The fighting started when MILF guerrillas reportedly opened fire at security forces who were serving arrest warrants for rebel field commanders Jamil Ombra and Sajid Pakiladato, in the far-flung village of Iginagampong in Shariff Aguak.

The two are suspects in the June 23 bomb attack that killed Datu Piang Mayor Saudi Ampatuan, a son of Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, in 2003 and the recent bomb attack on the governor.

Pakiladato denied that he and Ombra had a hand in the murder. "We have no reason to kill the governor because he is not our enemy," said Pakiladato in an interview with radio station dxMS. *Jeoffrey Maitem and Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau with a report from AFP*

Negros school, PNP, Church execs raise alarm on sex videos

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—NEGROS OCCIdental school, police and Church officials yesterday urged parents to keep a close watch on their children's activities because of reports that cellular phone videos of students engaging in sex are proliferating in the province.

Senior Supt. Pedro Merced, Bacolod police chief, said that students who allow videos to be taken of them while engaged in sex might be on drugs as he did not think that they would allow themselves to be videotaped if they were in their right senses.

Parents have a greater responsibility to keep a close watch on the activities of their children and instill the proper values in them, he added.

Merced said he would meet with school officials to discuss how such activities can be stopped.

A mother has raised concern over high school students engaged in sexual acts recorded through their cellular phone video cameras, a radio station here reported yesterday.

The mother, whose name was withheld, told RGMA's Super Radyo here that the students engaged in such acts inside an empty classroom in a Bacolod school.

In one video that the mother said she found on the cellular phone of her daughter, eight to nine high school girls were seen performing sexual acts together, the report said.

The females in the video were between 14 and 16 years old and appeared to be having fun, the radio report said.

It added that there were other reported cellular phone videos taken of such activities. The mother was reportedly concerned that such activity could happen within school premises.

Another cellular phone video circulating is of two alleged students having sex on the steps of an unidentified school, with the male boasting about the size of his sex organ. Merced said it appeared that a third party was involved, taking the video.

Eva Belicena, Negros Occidental schools superintendent, yesterday urged parents to keep a close watch on their children's after class activities and about the subject matters they view on the Internet.

The Internet gives students easy access to pornographic and sexually explicit material, she said.

She said students allowed to surf the Internet in their bedrooms until the wee hours of the morning have the opportunity to access such material.

Belicena said she is advising parents to put the computers of their children in areas of the house where they cannot surf in secret for pornographic materials.

> 'The Internet gives students easy access to porn, sexually explicit materials ...'

SNAP SHOT
Arthur Yap, chief of the Presidential Management Staff, snaps a picture of his boss, President Macapagal-Arroyo, while he was seated beside Lanao del Norte Vice Gov. Irma Ali.

LYN RILLON/PDI PHOTO

Cell site burned, but cops won't blame NPAs

By Chito Fuentes
and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—A GLOBE Telecommunications cell site in Poblacion, San Isidro, Bohol suffered heavy damage following a failed attempt to burn it down on Tuesday.

The military, however, ruled out the possibility that the New People's Army (NPA) was behind the attack.

Lt. Col. Jefferson Omandam, spokesperson of the AFP Central Command (Centcom) based in Cebu City, said the motive of the burning could be land dispute.

"That's the finding of our operatives and the local police in Bohol. The burning of the cell site has no connection to the communist ... movement in Bohol," Omandam said.

Omandam said initial investigation showed that there are many claimants on the lot where the cell site was erected. It was possible that one of the claimants was angered for failing to get a share from land rentals and retaliated by burning the cell site, he said.

Insp. Samuel Gabuya, chief of the San Isidro police, said there was no doubt that the incident was a case of arson but wouldn't pin the blame yet on communist guerrillas.

It was the third attack on a cell site in Bohol.

The previous attacks were in Loon town, on Oct. 23, 2002, and Tagbilaran City, on Sept. 25, 2005.

"It is not the usual modus (operandi of the NPA)," said the police chief.

New mining operators eye Ilocos Norte town

LAOAG CITY—NEW MINING operators are working on their application to extract minerals in the feldspar-rich town of Burgos, Ilocos Norte, town officials said.

Burgos Councilor Joejie Jimenez said two operators have filed their applications with the mayor's office to extract minerals in the villages of Agaga and Tanap, where feldspar and silica are abundant.

Feldspar is a mineral used in the manufacture of porcelain and glass while silica is used in the manufacture of cement, bricks, glass and other construction materials.

The application papers are pending at the mayor's office due to the absence of requirements needed in the issuance of a permit to operate, Jimenez said.

"The Burgos council has not yet issued its concurrence [to the application] because the operators failed to submit certifications that the communities [where the mining site will be put up] were in favor of the mining operation," he said.

Mayor Benjamin Campañano earlier called for the cancellation of a mining permit issued to the Northern Mining Integrated Inc. due to massive siltation that the company caused in a creek in the town and a river in the nearby town of Bangui.

The company, owned by the late Currimao Mayor Ernesto Go, started mining the area in the 1980s.

In 1999, the regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau ordered NMII to suspend its operations due to massive siltation in the Baruyen River in Bangui.

The Baruyen River is a natural reservoir, which supplies water to the Dangdangla Dam, a major source of irrigation water in Bangui.

Officials of Bangui had said siltation from the Baruyen River had reached the dam and reduced its capacity to store water.

The NMII was also ordered to dredge the Baruyen River, including its tributary, the Anangge Creek in Burgos. The creek used to be a major source of irrigation water and food for residents.

Onofre Menor, an NMII official, said dredging of the Anangge Creek and the upper portion of the Potrero River has not been completed.

"We have finished dredging the upper section [of the creek], while our check dams have been rehabilitated," Menor told members of the provincial environmental summit steering committee last week. Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Bulacan execs say issuance of permits not irregular

MALOLOS CITY—THE BULACAN provincial government Tuesday said it was issuing mining permits but that it was not irregular, but a power vested on it by the Local Government Code.

In a statement, provincial administrator Ma. Gladys Cruz-Sta. Rita said the authority to issue permits and licenses was provided for by the Local Government Code and the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

"The authority to issue permits and license to small-scale miners is a devolved function to the local government units. However, the issuance of the permit is scrutinized and deliberated on by the members of the provincial mining and regulatory board (PMRB)," Sta. Rita said.

She said the governor only approves the issuance of a permit and license upon the endorsement of the PMRB in accordance with merits of the requirements submitted by applicants.

"The law authorizes the governor to follow this mandate," she said.

On Monday, a labor group urged the filing of usurpation of authority charges against De la Cruz for issuing mining permits in Bulacan's quarry sites. *With a report from Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

RP didn't sign int'l law on indigenous people

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINES missed the opportunity to become a party to the adoption of an international law on indigenous peoples' rights that indigenous rights activists worldwide hailed as a "historic milestone" for them.

The Philippines abstained when country representatives were asked to sign a resolution adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on June 29.

"It's a shame that the Philippines has abstained when it boasts of a law on indigenous peoples' rights in the international community," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.

Tauli-Corpuz attended the UN Human Rights Council's first session on June 19-30 in Geneva, Switzerland.

She was referring to the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (Ipra or Republic Act 8371), which is often cited as a model law for indigenous peoples in the international community.

Not signing the resolution, she said, meant the government had failed indigenous Filipinos.

The UN Information Service (UNIS) reported that 30 countries voted for the adoption of the text of the declaration, which had remained a draft for the past 20 years. Two voted against the document while 12, including the Philippines, abstained. Three were absent.

In explaining why the Philippines abstained, the UNIS quoted Enrique Manalo, Philippine representative to the UN Human Rights Council, as saying that the country was already "fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the rights of indigenous peoples."

The declaration says indigenous peoples have the right to fully enjoy, "as a collective or as individuals, all human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the charter of the United Nations, the universal declaration of human rights and international human rights law."

The declaration also recognizes indigenous peoples as coequals with other citizens.

"Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin and identity," it says.

But Sen. Juan Flavier, who sponsored RA 8371, said he would side with caution in dealing with the United Nations.

Flavier said "it takes time to sign anything" involving the United Nations because "when you deal with the UN, you are dealing [with them] forever." *Maurice Malanes and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

INDIGENOUS peoples of the Cordillera, like this elder from Ifugao, have been producing tapuey (rice wine) for centuries.

EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

N. Korea test-fires 6 missiles, sparks outrage

From page A1

could reach the United States with a light payload.

The missiles all landed hundreds of kilometers away from Japan, and there were no reports the missiles caused damage within Japanese territory. A Japanese government spokesperson, Shinzo Abe, said the first missile was launched at about 3:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Security Council to meet

The political reaction was swift. The White House called the tests a "provocation"; the UN Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday; and Tokyo warned of economic sanctions against the impoverished, communist country.

Still, North Korea remained defiant. A North Korea foreign ministry official told Japanese journalists in Pyongyang that the regime there has an undeniable right to test missiles.

"The missile launch is an issue that is entirely within our sovereignty. No one has the right to dispute it," Ri Pyong-dok, a researcher on Japanese affairs at the North's foreign ministry, said on footage aired by TBS. "On the missile launch, we are not bound by any agreement."

Japanese national broadcaster NHK reported that an unidentified foreign ministry official in Pyongyang acknowledged the firing of the missiles, but Ri told reporters that diplomats like himself were unaware of what the military was doing.

More tests feared

There were fears of more test-firings. Pyongyang could test additional missiles soon despite the international furor over Wednesday's launches, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said after making a protest via telephone to North Korean Ambassador to Canberra Chon Jae-hong.

"We think they probably do intend to launch more missiles in the next day or two," Downer told reporters, without explaining if the possibility of more tests came up in his talk with Chon.

South Korea, separated from the North by the world's most heavily armed border, said the test launches would further deepen its neighbor's international isolation, sour public opinion in the South toward Pyongyang and hurt efforts to control weapons of mass destruction.

The tests, which came as the United States celebrated its Independence Day holiday and launched the space shuttle Discovery from Cape Canaveral, Florida, appeared timed to draw the most attention from Washington.

Some speculated that Pyongyang wanted some of the spotlight focused on Iran's nuclear program.

"North Korea wants to get the US to direct bilateral negotiations by using the missile card," said Paik Hak-soon, a North Korea expert at the Seoul-based Sejong Institute. "Timing the launch date on July 4 is an attempt to apply maximum pressure on the US government."

Economic sanctions

In Tokyo, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso warned of a "very high possibility" the United Nations would level economic sanctions against North Korea. Japan also protested the launches officially through Beijing, and banned a North Korean ferry from Japanese ports for six months.

The tests followed weeks of mounting speculation that North Korea would launch a Taepodong-2. US intelligence reports indicated Pyongyang was taking steps to prepare for a launch, but the timing was unknown. North Korea refused to confirm the preparations, but insisted it had the right to such a test.

The test was likely to cast a pall over efforts to lure North Korea back to stalled six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program. Pyongyang has boycotted the negotiations to protest a US crackdown on alleged North Korean counterfeiting and other financial crimes. A North Korean official on Wednesday said that his country would stand by that stance.

Diplomacy

Diplomatic moves over North Korea gathered pace. US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill was to leave Washington for the region later on Wednesday, and the launches coincided with a trip by South Korea's security chief to Washington for consultations. China's vice premier was also scheduled to go to Pyongyang next week.

The United States denounced the launch, but did not consider it a threat to national security. US officials vowed a diplomatic rather than a military response.

"We are urgently consulting with members of the Security Council," said John Bolton, the US ambassador to the United Nations. Thomas Schieffer, the US ambassador to Japan, called the launches "a provocative act," and the White House said Pyongyang had further alienated itself from the world community.

Scud technology

North Korea's missile program is based on Scud technology provided by the former Soviet Union or Egypt, according to American and South Korean officials. North Korea started its Rodong-1 missile project in the late 1980s and test-fired the missile for the first time in 1993.

North Korea had observed a moratorium on long-range missile launches since 1999. It shocked the world in 1998 by firing a Taepodong missile over Japan and into the Pacific Ocean.

Missile-defense shield

The United States and its allies South Korea and Japan have taken quick steps over the past week to strengthen their missile defenses. Washington and Tokyo are working on a joint missile-defense shield, and South Korea is considering the purchase of American SM-2 defensive missiles for its destroyers.

The United States and North Korea have been in a standoff over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program since 2002. Experts, however, doubt the communist regime has managed to develop a nuclear warhead small enough to mount on its long-range missiles. *AP*

IN THE KNOW

BELOW is a timeline on missile development in North Korea.

- **Aug. 31, 1998:** North Korea fires a multistage Taepodong-1 missile over Japan and into the Pacific Ocean.
- **Sept. 13, 1999:** North Korea pledges to freeze long-range missile tests.
- **Sept. 2002:** North Korea agrees in summit talks with Japan to extend its moratorium on missile tests beyond 2003.
- **May 2004:** North Korea reaffirms its missile moratorium in summit talks with Japan.
- **May 2005:** North Korea fires a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan.
- **March 2006:** North Korea fires two short-range missiles.
- **May 18:** Japan says North Korea moved a missile to a launch site. Media reports identify it as a Taepodong-2.
- **June 7:** South Korea expresses deep concern over signs North Korea may be preparing to test-fire a ballistic missile.
- **June 14:** The US ambassador to South Korea warns of American countermeasures if North Korea conducts a missile test.
- **June 16:** The United States says a test of a Taepodong-2 long-range missile may be imminent.
- **June 18:** North Korea vows to increase its "military deterrent" to cope with what it called US attempts to provoke war.
- **June 20:** A North Korean official is quoted as saying the country is not bound by 2002 Pyongyang Declaration moratorium on missile tests.
- **June 21:** US President George W. Bush warns North Korea faces further isolation if it test-fires a long-range missile.
- **June 21:** A North Korean diplomat in New York demands direct talks with the United States. Washington rejects the demand.
- **June 28:** Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao says North Korea should refrain from aggravating regional tensions with missile launch.
- **June 29:** Bush warns a North Korean missile launch is unacceptable. Visiting Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi says a launch would be followed by "various pressures."
- **July 3:** North Korea says it would respond to a preemptive US military attack with an "annihilating strike and a nuclear war."
- **July 5:** North Korea launches a series of missiles. *AP*

PAF after 59 years: Mostly air, little force but still soars

From page A1

struggled to be upbeat despite the fact that its overall capability had waned through the years.

"The recent AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) shift from external to internal defense that saw the abolition or downgrading of PAF offices and units and the phasing out of assets either too old or too expensive to maintain should have posed as a setback," the PAF said in its newsletter's anniversary issue.

"Instead," it said, "the [PAF] reorganized, transformed, and soared to new heights of success—surpassing recorded feats, undertaking new and diverse endeavors, but unified by a common drive of doing more with less."

The irony of being a military branch that has had to adjust to change on the basis of lack of funds or varying government priorities is not lost on PAF pilots, both young and old.

They spoke with the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity, for obvious reasons.

Once potent force

"We used to be a potent force," a well-placed PAF official said yesterday.

"We moved about without anyone challenging us. We were the best in Asia, and when the jet age was ushered in, we were ahead of the other Asian countries," he said.

The official recalled that years ago, veteran PAF pilots bragged about how they would fly low over Sabah, raising alarm among the Malaysians.

But now, the Malaysian Air Force is stronger and far better equipped than the PAF.

"We can no longer do what we could do before. That is quite obvious," he said.

In a separate interview, a junior officer said he saw a bleak future for the PAF unless the government showed strong political will to upgrade the force's efficiency in terms of aircraft and equipment.

"Some young pilots are afraid to fly PAF aircraft because these may not be safe. We have a skilled crew, but it's not comforting to hear that the planes get by with the barest maintenance," he said.

The two men also said the Philippines practically had no air defense, especially after the F-5s—the PAF's "Freedom Fighters" and symbol of air defense—were decommissioned last year because repair work was getting too costly.

"In any country, the primary role of the Air Force is to perform air defense," the ranking official said. "Although we have a radar system, we don't have the essential fighter aircraft."

In lieu of the supersonic fighter jets, the PAF is using S-211s and OV-10s to patrol the country's borders. "But these aircraft are slow-moving. In terms of air superiority, *talo tayo* (we're losers)," he said.

According to the official, it may take another seven years before new fighter jets are purchased under the Philippine Defense Reform program.

With the lack of fighter jets, the running joke among young pilots at flying school is that the PAF may eventually decide to outfit the light plane Cessna, an Air Force trainer aircraft, with rockets, the junior officer said.

"The Cessna's call sign is T-41D, where the D stands for Delta. [It might become] T-41D, as in Destroyer," he said, chuckling.

Plaudits

But in his speech at the anniversary ceremony, Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes, the PAF commanding general, said the force still "looks to gain a wing that would take it beyond the horizon and the dreams of every fighter pilot with it."

"After all, the [PAF] is still about credible deterrence, as much as it is, for the time being, about internal support," Reyes said.

In the meantime, the PAF has increased its operational readiness rate to "an average all-time high of 75 percent."

Reyes credited the Air Logistics Command and the 410th Maintenance Wing under Maj. Gen. Fernando Manalo and Brig. Gen. Alex Flores for providing the PAF "the capacity to return an increasing number of aircraft to frontlines in shorter periods of time."

Reyes also hailed the PAF's contributions to internal security operations and national development missions.

He said the PAF had flown more than 1,700 national development sorties—mostly rainmaking flights, civic action activities and other relief and rehabilitation missions.

He also said that up until the first quarter of the year, the PAF completed close to 2,000 search, rescue and relief missions, which included medical evacuation and mercy flights.

The keynote speaker, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, said an MG-520 upgrade as well as the acquisition of 27 additional Huey choppers, night flying systems for the air crews, and air surveillance and communications equipment had been programmed for this year.

Source of pride

That the PAF is the "most constitutionally grounded" military branch during the Arroyo administration's trying times is also something to be proud of, Reyes said.

"We have strengthened our troop information and dissemination networks to help our soldiers stay within the chain of command, and support the Constitution," he said.

IN THE KNOW

AS A MAJOR SERVICE of the Armed Forces, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) is expected to have the capability for external defense.

But the report of the fact-finding commission on the failed Oakwood mutiny of July 2003 said that "with its transport aircraft inventory severely depleted, and the number of its combat jets down to virtually nil, the PAF has been limited to its current role of close air support for ground forces."

The report noted, among other problems, the poor pilot-to-aircraft ratio, which at that time stood at 4:1 when the ideal was 3:1. It also said that "at any given time, there are 40 to 50 trainee pilots forced to queue for the use of three trainer planes."

The PAF now has 1,700 officers and 14,500 enlisted personnel, according to Maj. Augusto de la Peña, Information Office director.

It has around 1,000 pilots but only around 120 aircraft for use in tactical, defense and rescue operations.

The PAF has also been losing its pilots to commercial airlines, with as many as 49 pilots leaving since 2004, De la Peña said.

"A lot of them searched for greener pastures in commercial airlines in the United States and United Kingdom, while some [migrated abroad] with their families," he said.

PAF pilots reportedly receive a monthly salary of P30,000 at most, depending on their rank, but commercial airline pilots receive up to 10 times more.

"But the numbers are negligible because we have around 1,000 pilots and the average number of graduates every year is 50," De la Peña said. "Once they graduate, they also get an eight-year service contract, so we have enough pilots."

120 aircraft

Among the around 120 operational PAF aircraft are UH-1H (Huey) helicopters (around 50) and C-130 Hercules planes (three) for transport duties, and OV-10 Broncos (15), MG-520s (24) and Sikorsky helicopters (six) for close air support.

The command also has an aircraft equipped with 24 night vision goggles.

The PAF's latest acquisitions are 20 UH-1H helicopters bought from Singapore in 2004-05, De la Peña said.

He said 26 more of the same type were expected from the United States, "as promised by US President George Bush."

9 bases nationwide

The PAF has nine bases nationwide, with the main headquarters at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City. The other bases are the Clark Air Base and Basa Air Base, both in Pampanga; Danilo Atienza Air Base in Cavite; Mactan Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu; Fernando Air Base in Batangas; Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan; Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga, and Rajah Buayan Air Base in General Santos City.

Mel Lawrence de Guzman, PDI Research

Life is sweeter for new generation of sugar farmers

From page A1

Philippines was importing sugar, the top export commodity just 50 years earlier when it won independence from the United States.

Innovative ideas

Martin, who did not know cane from weed when she started out, toughed it out through the bad times, and with her innovative business ideas has since turned the family farm into a success story.

Like other young planters, her modern methods have helped Philippine sugar production, which began during the long Spanish colonial era but grew into mass-scale cultivation in Negros under American rule.

"The '80s were really difficult times," recalled fellow planter Francis de la Rama.

He said the planters "all used to carry firearms" to protect themselves against the NPA guerrillas.

But now, with the insurgency split and in disarray, De la Rama tours his 100-hectare farm on the outskirts of Silay City without fear, clad casually in blue jeans and trainer shoes.

In his full-size pickup truck he carries a laptop, into which yields and inputs per plot are meticulously logged in a spreadsheet.

Better than their parents

With labor trouble gone, the planters focused on employing modern management techniques and scientific farming methods to turn the failing farms around.

The new breed of sugar planters had had more extensive formal schooling and broader horizons, said Leon Arceo, director of the Philippine Sugar Research Institute in nearby Victorias City.

"They're doing better than their parents," Arceo said. "They are innovative. They try new things."

Martin, who employed foreign experts to recommend what was best for her farm, said her first challenge was changing the mind-set of the workers who, like their ancestors on the farm, were inured to feudal conditions.

She abolished the practice of farm hands borrowing money from the estate against future wages, and leased them 10 percent of the hacienda as well as tractors so they could grow their own grains and greens.

She also signed away ownership of their homes, though not the land beneath them.

Dignity

"You cannot condemn them to a life of bondage. I wanted them to develop some dignity of their own," Martin said.

Her husband, Luis Martin, who separately manages another sugar farm on the less fertile area of central Negros, added: "That way, they become more or less your partners. That's a good incentive for making them perform beyond their expectations."

The results have been startling. Sugar production rose by nearly 44 percent to a record 2.34 million tons between 1998 and 2004, when sugar exports resumed.

Cane production in the latest crop year is up nearly 20 percent to 25.87 million tons.

Modern farming methods, better varieties, and skilled managers have revived the 196,000 hectares of Negros cane fields that account for about 56 percent of the Philippines' total sugar output.

Martin's 200-hectare farm holds the record with a yield of 12.5 tons of refined sugar per hectare.

"Next year we expect a bumper crop" of about 2.1 million tons, 8 percent above the current crop year, Arceo said.

Set up by the planters and financed by liens imposed on sugar produce, the research institute that Arceo heads has helped drive the boom by developing more productive and pest-resistant varieties and advising planters.

Transformation

Record-high sugar prices are transforming downtown Bacolod, the provincial capital, where the squat buildings have taken on fresh layers of candy-colored paint and cafes and pastry shops thrive, reflecting the buoyant mood of the island of 3.1 million people.

The airport is packed with families headed for holidays abroad. A bigger terminal and runway are set to open next door to De la Rama's farm next year.

Local dealerships report rapid sales of pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles.

With record-high oil prices and amid record-high sugar prices, ethanol is now seen by some here as potentially driving future demand.

However, memories of the bad times are causing some to hold off on conspicuous consumption.

"Most people here want new cars," said Regina Martin, who uses soot from the sugar mills and biodegradable household refuse as fertilizer. "We buy tractors instead."

But Arceo said the boom was hiding the problem of the decline in yields for sugar farms that were subjected to land reform.

Negros now produces about 80 tons of cane per hectare, well above the world average of about 60 tons, but productivity is a lot worse in other sugar-growing areas, particularly in typhoon-prone Luzon where the wet season is also shorter.

Arceo said the Philippines also had higher production costs because the tiny farm sizes discouraged mechanization. Eighty percent of the Negros cane farms now measure 10 hectares or less.

Financing problem

Throughout Negros, land reform beneficiaries are struggling, according to Fred Barredo, a veteran cane farm technician from Victorias.

Unlike the better-educated planters, the beneficiaries are often former farm workers with little training in crop management.

"The problem is financing, so they resort to loan sharks," Barredo told AFP. "Their farms are usually the ones that are not well-managed" because they lack funds to lease tractors, buy fertilizers and control weeds.

Carabao-drawn plows cannot create furrows deep enough for the cane's optimum growth, he said.

Coops

De la Rama said shifting to other crops was out of the question because only sugar had a guaranteed market here.

He said the planters' associations were helping organize these small farmers into cooperatives so the farms could be run as bigger, single units to improve output.

"Sugarcane is a plantation crop. You cannot cut it up into small pieces," said Martin.

Among the failed farms are those held by the beneficiaries of a 300-hectare plot in Pontevedra town that her father had volunteered for land reform.

"Now these beneficiaries are all coming back, asking to be taken back as farm workers," she said. *AFP*

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FOURTH OF JULY
Fireworks light up the sky above the the United States Embassy on Roxas Boulevard Tuesday night to celebrate the US Independence Day. In the Philippines, the fourth of July is marked as Fil-Am Friendship Day, which militants say ring hollow in the light of, among other things, the alleged rape of a Filipina by four American soldiers in Subic.

REM ZAMORA

'Nicole' tells her story before packed crowd today

By Volt Contreras

TODAY'S HEARING OF THE SUBIC RAPE CASE at the Makati City Regional Trial Court Branch 139 promises to be a packed session, with VIPs wanting to be present as the Filipino complainant takes the stand some six weeks into the landmark trial.

As the prosecution's 20th witness, "Nicole" is expected to detail her alleged ordeal on Nov. 1, 2005—being raped by an American Marine in a cruising van at the Subic Bay Freeport while three of his comrades cheered him on.

A court employee yesterday told the INQUIRER that an unusually big number and variety of VIPs had phoned to request seat "reservations" at the City Hall's Old Session Hall, where the hearings are being held.

Those who called include officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Commission on the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and the US Embassy, other RTC judges and "some senators," the court employee said.

Blaming the victim

But if blogs, Internet chat rooms, or family conversations are to be the gauge, Nicole is not doing all that well in the court of public opinion, according to Evalyn Ursua one of her lawyers.

"This means we have a long way to go in terms of educating the public about rape," the private prosecutor said.

Ursua said that per the "monitoring" done by volunteers, among them law students of the University of the Philippines who are assisting her in the case, Nicole is even being "blamed" for the alleged rape.

"Opinion is divided, and there's a significant number of blogs we have monitored that are against her or think she doesn't deserve support because she was drunk [on the night of the incident] and 'therefore' had it coming," Ursua told the INQUIRER.

Ursua said some of the law students helping give support to Nicole had also confided that "their own families think differently" of the complainant.

"They just [refuse to] get into an argument [with those family members] because they think it will be unproductive," the lawyer said.

She said these observations, particularly in the blogs, were made more disturbing by the fact that Filipino bloggers were predominantly young adults in the same age group as the 22-year-old Nicole.

"How can we address this classic victim-blaming?" she said.

Myths, misconceptions

Ursua said the case, aside from being historic for involving American soldiers, had "brought to the fore the many prejudices and knee-jerk reactions of people."

"The usual myths and misconceptions about rape have come out," she said.

One "myth" is that rape cannot possibly involve the use of a condom, Ursua said, alluding to the used condom found stuck in Nicole's panties when bystanders found her after the alleged abuse.

Another is that a rape victim who got herself drunk probably "wanted it" because she has "loose morals," and that only a "virginal woman" can credibly complain of rape, Ursua said.

She added: "So what does this thinking imply when we have a UP study showing that up to 70 percent of Filipino women who are young adults, or of Nicole's age, drink?"

Lomibao: Free at last

By Luige A. del Puerto

'FINALLY FREE.' This was how former police chief Arturo Lomibao described how he felt on his first few minutes as a civilian after turning the reins of the Philippine National Police to his successor.

Lomibao, who turned 56 yesterday and whose term as PNP chief was hounded by one crisis after another, said now he can contemplate marriage.

"I'm free from stress, free because of course I can (now) wake up at any time I want, free because I can now manage my time—unlike before when there is a schedule to follow—and I'm free because as the President said, I can now remarry," he said.

The soft-spoken Lomibao, a widower, did not elaborate.

"That (marriage) is another major decision. I will not say when it is going to be held, but it will come, maybe sooner than expected," he said.

Shortly after assuming the top police post last year, Lomibao had said he hoped to settle down soon. His colleagues eagerly awaited for what would have been a rare occasion of witnessing a police chief say "I do."

But that plan might have been overtaken by events, so to speak.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD. Director Arturo Lomibao wishes his successor, Oscar Calderon, lots of luck during yesterday's turnover at Malacañang as President Arroyo looks on

JOAN BONDOC

Lomibao yesterday reminisced lessons and some funny moments during his 16-month term as PNP chief.

"I think I am the only chief, PNP who is delivering a retirement speech without the benefit of having given an inaugural address," he said.

On March 14, 2005, Lomibao had to skip his own turnover ceremony after Abu Sayyaf detainees seized control of their detention quarters at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig, sparking a crisis that killed 23, including a Special Action Force trooper.

He said he learned numerous lessons during his stint as chief: Courage and faith, and compassion and leadership.

Lomibao said the experience of his son, Chase, in the hands of a "*kotong* cop" opened his eyes to the realities of policemen on the ground.

Chase, he narrated, had just come from the hospital where he took his girlfriend when a cop flagged him down in Quezon City.

The cop grilled Chase and asked where he lived.

Not wanting to sound arrogant, Chase said he lives somewhere in Greenhills. When the cop asked specifically where, he first said "somewhere in Greenhills," then in "Crame" and finally, at the "White House," the official residence of the police chief.

This was how the conversation went, according to Lomibao.

"So you know PNP chief Lomibao?" the cop asked.

"Yes sir, he is my dad," Chase replied.

"Okay, just give me money for gasoline."

"I only have P30 in my wallet."

"Okay, that will do."

Instead of assigning the cop to Mindanao, Lomibao sent him and 250 other members of the Quezon City mobile patrol unit to Subic for a values formation and leadership seminar.

"(The incident) gave me more reason to push for stronger stations—physically, mentally and spiritually—so that every officer who wears a badge can do the job without having to compromise his principle or dignity just to get by," he said.

Lomibao said he was leaving his post confident that the PNP transformation program had taken root under his term. He urged his successor to "propagate its fruits."

Known for his "coolness" even under tremendous pressure, Lomibao never raises his voice.

In the days leading to his retirement, Lomibao said he was asked what he wanted to be remembered for.

"Not the more than 100 police stations we built during my term; not the solid allegiance to flag and democracy that helped withstand protests and destabilization … but only one thing: that by all these that we have done for the service and for our country, I did my best to bring back the dignity of the uniform and the badge," he said.

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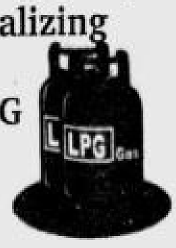
WHAT'S INSIDE

SC backs energy dept circular penalizing 'abusive' sellers of LPG /A18
Valenzuela shuts down 500 firms without business permits /A18
Pasig mayor creates own security force /A18
Reading program launched in Muntinlupa's public schools /A18



EUSEBIO

Gay discrimination case vs school junked

By Nancy C. Carvajal

AN ASSISTANT CITY PROSECUTOR in Quezon City yesterday dismissed the first gay discrimination case filed against a Catholic school based in the city, citing similarities of the case's merits brought before the National Labor Relations Commission.

"The issues involved in the case are related to the issues raised before the NLRC and could not be resolved until after the NLRC case has been finally resolved," said City prosecutor Gibson Araula in his decision

Merits

Araula said the merits of the case could only be resolved after the NLRC has made a decision on the case

Marlon Lacsamana filed a criminal case against officials of Miriam College last year for alleged violation of a city ordinance forbidding discrimination against homosexuals.

Lacsamana also brought the matter to the NLRC, but the labor arbiter has yet to render a decision on the case.

Charged in the complaint were school president Patricia Licuanan, vice president for Academic Affairs Grace Dalisay, associate dean Rosa Paragas, human resources chief Olivia Ilagan and chief librarian Emelita del Rosario.

Contract

Lacsamana, a school librarian, filed the complaint after his contract was not renewed by the school management after he "wed" his male partner.

In his complaint, Lacsamana said the non-renewal of his one-year contract was unfair and discriminatory because what he held was a tenure—tract position that entitled an employee to tenurial security once an employee passes the three-year probationary period.

According to the school officials, however, Lacsamana was employed under a one-year fixed term contract which had expired.

Congress may be asked to look into PNU row

Opposition continues vs new president

By Tina G. Santos

SEEKING A CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY could be the next step taken by the Philippine Normal University (PNU), now embroiled in a controversy over the choosing of its new president, to look into perceived loopholes of Republic Act 8292, the law governing state universities and colleges (SUCs).

This possibility was raised by Felice Yeban, professor at the PNU Department of Social Sciences, as opposition to the appointment of Lutgardo Barbo as the educational institution's new president continued.

BOR selection

Another professor, who refused to be identified, claimed a high-ranking official of the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) acknowledged that the PNU Board of Regents (BOR) erred in selecting its new president.

Politics

"Definitely, somebody was behind all this. It's all politics. But it would mean loss of face or *kahiyaan na* if that person admits the mistake," the professor quoted the CHEd official as saying.

A lawyer working for a member of the BOR also reportedly said that if the BOR decided to correct the error, the decision could set a precedent for other SUCs.

Politics

The lawyer, one of the observers during the regents' meeting when the 'appointment of the new president was announced, reportedly said: "If the BOR withdrew its decision, other SUCs that might have had the same experience—their BOR choosing politics over merit—and it might also pressure their respective BORs to do the same thing—change their decisions."

Requirements

Declaring that their opposition should not be viewed as a personal attack on Barbo, protesting faculty members and students alleged the BOR changed the minimum requirements for the presidency apparently to accommodate the new official.

"The PNU is accredited as Level 4 SUC, thus, the president must have an appropriate doctoral degree. But the regents changed it to one who 'preferably' had a doctorate degree," another professor claimed.

About time

"A lot of other SUCs are experiencing problems with their governing boards. Maybe it's time our lawmakers look into this," Yeban said.

Fire leaves 200 families in Manila homeless

By Margaux Ortiz

TWENTY HOUSES were destroyed and some 200 families were left homeless by a fire yesterday afternoon in a Muslim community in Manila.

Three residents sustained minor injuries during the incident.

SFO1 Emmanuel Gaspar said the fire started around 12:50 p.m. at the abandoned two-story Asina Lodging House on Marayag Street, Islamic Center, Quiapo.

"Witnesses saw a woman enter the abandoned building 30 minutes before the fire started," Gaspar told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Gaspar said most of the affected families were transients.

The injured were identified as Khali Lacman, Jober Banto and Saidan Min.

They were brought to the Mary Chiles Hospital in Sta. Mesa, Manila, for treatment..

The arson investigator said the fire reached the fifth alarm before it was put out at 1:47 p.m.

He added they had not yet determined the cause of the fire.

Injuries

Lacman sustained lacerations on his left eyebrow,

Banto had cuts on his right arm and legs while Min was injured on his right arm.

The houses razed in the fire were made of concrete and wood.

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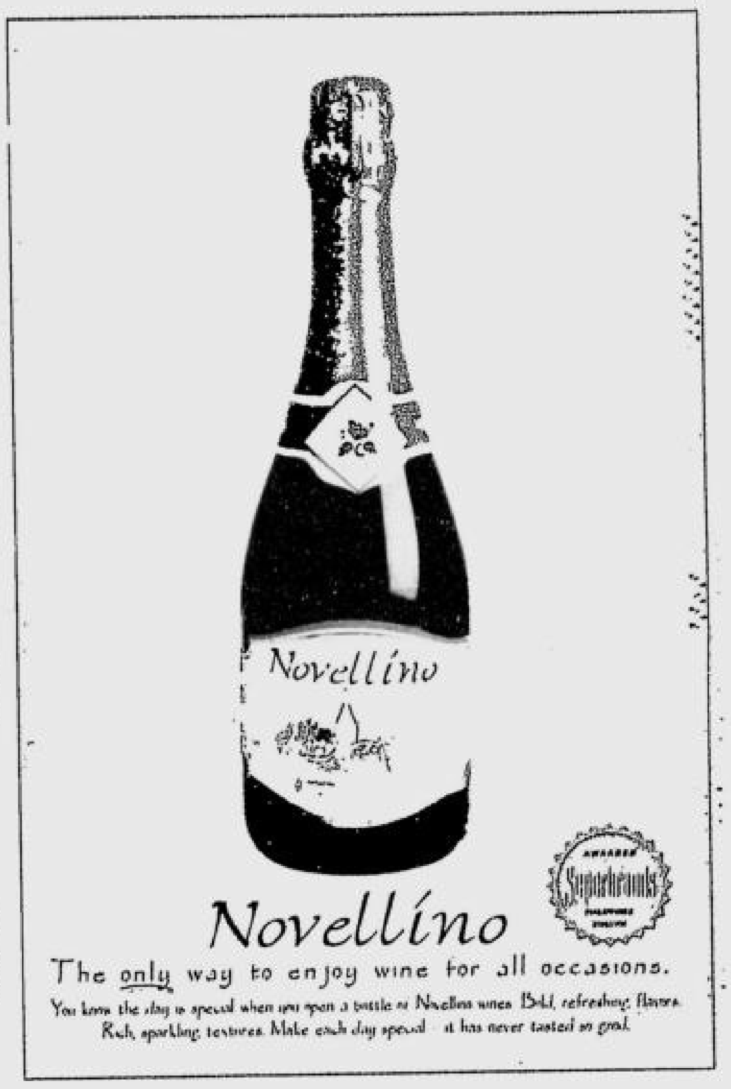
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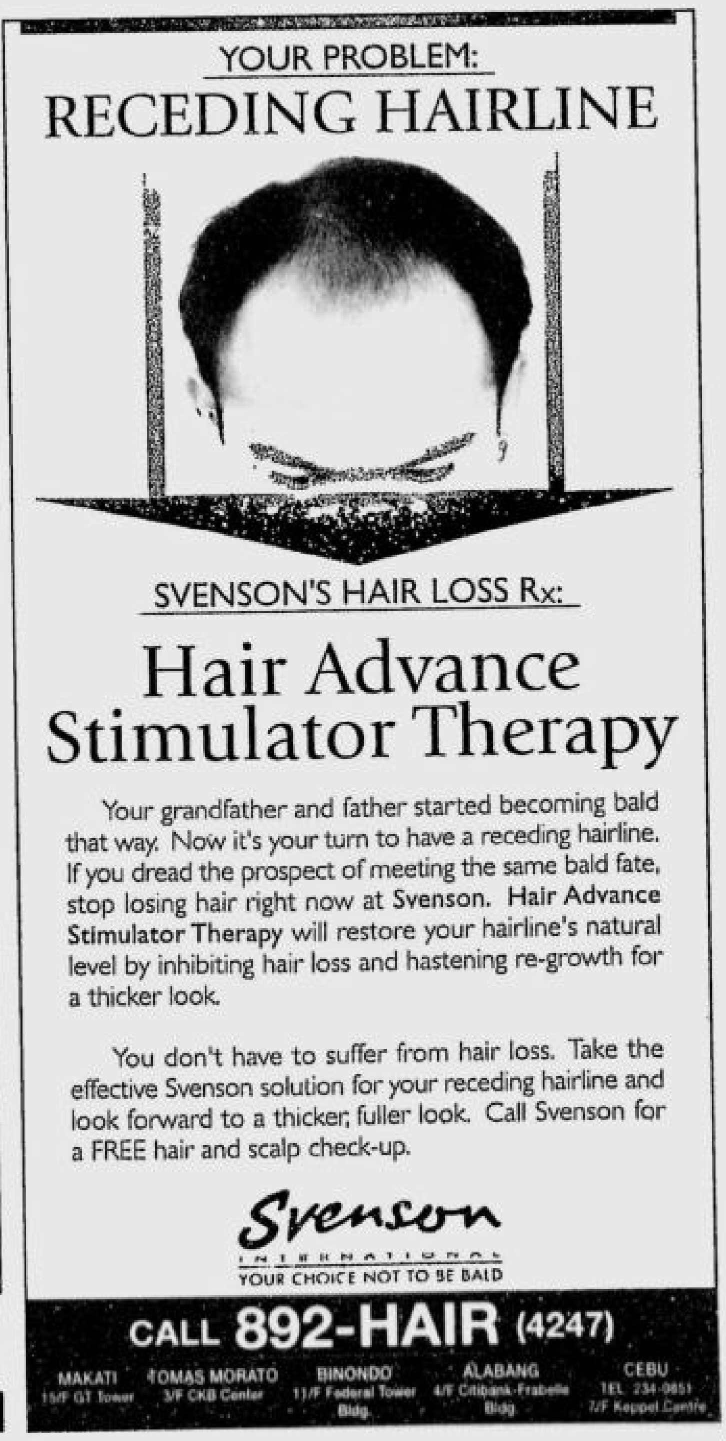
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FLIPPING OVER FLIP FLOPS
Flip flops, the popular footwear worn by everyone from chic socialites to street urchins, are the principal items on sale in this store in Sucat, Paranaque City. Brisk sales of the casual slip-ons have been reported in classy boutiques and neighborhood corner stores. REM ZAMORA

DOE campaign against illegal LPG trade practices gets boost from SC

By Abigail L. Ho

A RECENT SUPREME COURT decision has given the much-needed "muscle" to the Department of Energy's campaign against illegal practices in the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) industry.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said yesterday that "the court's imprimatur," gave law enforcement agencies the confidence to run after people committing illegal practices.

A Department of Energy circular sets penalties for "abusive players" in the LPG industry. Considered illegal practices are under-filling of cylinders; and tampering, altering or modifying of containers by changing the valve, or repainting and re-labeling them.

Only legitimate owners of tanks could do these, according to the DOE.

Illegal practices

Other illegal practices include unauthorized cylinder refilling, lack of trade name, use of unbranded cylinders, use of cylinders with no serial number and tare weight or with incorrect tare weight.

Penalties

DOE Circular No. 2000-06-010 imposes penalties ranging from fines of P500 per cylinder for the first offense, P10,000 per cylinder for the second offense, and possible closure of business establishment for the third offense.

The circular was challenged in court by the LPG Refillers Association of the Philippines Inc.

The group alleged the circular was unconstitutional and confiscatory in nature.

In its decision, the high tribunal said Batas Pambansa 33, as amended, made illegal trading, adulteration, under-filling, hoarding and overpricing of petroleum products, criminal acts, the DOE said.

The DOE, Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Interior and Local Government and LGUs formed recently a multi-agency task force for the strict enforcement of rules against illegal and unsafe practices in the LPG industry.

Violations

According to DOE data, 61 percent of LPG establishments inspected by the LPG Task Force from January to May were selling unbranded cylinders, as well as underfilled and defective tanks with fake seals or no tare weights markings, serial numbers and appropriate seals.

In 2005, 76 percent of inspected establishments recorded one or more violations.

HELP GINALYN MOLAR
The parents of one-year-old Ginalyn Molar are appealing for medical assistance from kindhearted readers. According to doctors from the Philippine Heart Center at East Avenue Medical Center, Ginalyn Molar needs surgery for the correction of patent ductus arteriosus and coartation of the aorta as soon as possible. Interested donors may contact 0918-5608977. Donations may also be sent directly to Gina Molar's account at Equitable Savings Bank account # 0755-09358-0.

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that half of the robbery incidents in the country (536 out of 1,006 cases) during the first quarter of 2006 occurred in Metro Manila?

Robbery incidents in Metro Manila soared by 51 percent from 355 cases in the first quarter of 2005 to 536 in the first quarter of 2006, according to figures from the Philippine National Police.

Robbery cases accounted for 44 percent of street crimes committed in the National Capital Region in the first quarter. The second most popular crime was possession and use of illegal drugs (335 out of 1,214 cases of street crimes).

Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research

New PNP chief very approachable, say colleagues

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE NEW CHIEF OF THE PHILIPpine National Police (PNP), Oscar Calderon, always wears a smile that has endeared him not only to his colleagues but also to civilians as well.

"*Madaling lapitan ng mga sibilyan* (highly approachable to civilians)," is how retired police colonel Wally Sombero, a former colleague at the defunct Criminal Investigation Service (CIS), describes Calderon.

"Self-effacing" and "a team player," is how retired two-star police general Lucas Managuelod, Calderon's former boss at the CIS and PNP Recom 4, describes the new PNP chief.

"He's not a grandstand player, Mon. He is decisive but meticulous, an excellent criminal investigator, and an operations man," Managuelod adds.

Another virtue the new PNP chief has is being a doting husband and father.

"Apart from his work, his family comes first," says Managuelod.

From what this writer has gathered about Calderon, he never flaunted his being a relative of President Macapagal-Arroyo although he has always been seen with Ms Arroyo since she was still senator.

He never denies or confirms his blood relations with the President whenever he is asked how he is related to the Commander-in-Chief.

* * *

Here's a piece of unsolicited advice to Calderon: If he wants civilians to love him more and trust in the police again, he should act on complaints filed by ordinary citizens against cops.

Many complaints by civilians are not acted upon in the various units within the PNP.

I should know. As a public service show host, I've referred many complaints by civilians against cops to the various units of the PNP, as well as to the National Police Commission. Most of these complaints are practically rotting on the shelves.

What Calderon might want to do is to order the administrative cases on erring cops speeded up.

* * *

The newly-appointed PNP chief might also want to look into the activities of some members of the Traffic Management Group (TMG).

Some TMG members are in cahoots with car thieves. There was that TMG officer in Central Luzon who released recovered stolen vehicles to a car theft suspect.

There is a syndicate within the TMG that causes the approval of clearances of stolen vehicles. Afterwards, the same gang apprehends and confiscates the same vehicles from unsuspecting buyers.

This syndicate has long been operating within the TMG.

* * *

There is talk that erstwhile PNP chief Arturo Lomibao may be given the top post of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

And why not? Lomibao is very much qualified for the job since his expertise is intelligence and investigation work, which is what the NBI is all about.

As to the argument that he's not a lawyer, well, the best chief that the NBI has ever had, the late Col. Jose Lukban, was not a lawyer.

The late retired police general Reynaldo Wycoco, an efficient NBI chief, was not a lawyer too.

* * *

Here's good news about that Grade V pupil who was raped by her science teacher at the Bagong Barrio Elementary School in Caloocan City.

Tomas Gayatao, 42, was arrested Tuesday by Caloocan City cops based on a warrant issued by a court.

Gayatao will have to remain in jail for the duration of the trial since rape is a non-bailable offense.

Gayatao's arrest and detention were made possible through the efforts of my staff at "Isumbong Mo (Tulfo Brothers)" TV program.

The "Isumbong" staff members knocked at the door of the Caloocan City Prosecutor's Office to expedite the preliminary investigation of the rape case that was taking so long to resolve.

500 Valenzuela firms without business permits closed

By Nancy C. Carvajal

MORE THAN 500 ESTABLISHments in Valenzuela City were ordered closed for not having the required business permits requirements, thus indirectly making its customers at risk, according to the head of a task force created to run after violators.

"We have to close the shops of those who have not acquired business permits to protect their clients from possible danger," said Edward Faustino, chief of the city's Business Permits Enforcement Tax Force.

Faustino explained that without the necessary business permits required by the city, their men would not have the chance to inspect the safety facilities on the premises of these establishments, if any.

"There's no way for us to know if they also have complied with fire department regulations where a fire exit is a must, or in the case of restaurants, if sanitary standards had been followed," he said.

Faustino said at least half of the 8,000 business establishments in the city had not acquired business permits for various reasons.

Among those ordered closed were plastic and slippers factories, warehouses, restaurants and junk shops that had been operating for years, Faustino said.

He added that the task force would not spare any establishment, including *sari-sari* (variety) stores, but noted that these small stores had the highest rate of compliance when it comes with the required permits.

He also said that after three written warnings, the establishments were given five days to process their papers before an order for temporary closure is issued by Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian, based on the task force's recommendation.

METROBRIEFS

Reading program in Munti

MUNTINLUPA City students have a new morning habit. Right after the school bell rings, students in all public schools in the city are off to an early start reading a novel or a newspaper. The city's Department of Education division recently launched the "Drop Everything and Read" (DEAR) program to teach the students the importance of reading. Under the new program, all public elementary and high school students are required to read for 10 minutes before their classes begin in the morning. Teachers will pick out a best reader in each class every quarter. The award will be based on the number of stories or books each student has read. Dr. Fe Faz, division superintendent, said the program is part of the Department of Education's Read-a-Thon nationwide project. The program, according to Faz, is an effort to help solve the deteriorating quality of education in the country partly caused by poor reading habits. To bolster the project, the local government has also launched a newspaper drive to raise funds for a mini library in each classroom. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Nurse loses $96,000

A 32-YEAR-OLD nurse who just returned from working abroad was drugged and robbed of $96,000 near her house in Quezon City on Tuesday noon, police said. Station 7 Desk Officer P02 Marissa Lim said Josephine Catubig lost the dollars (equivalent to P50 million) to a businessman identified as Geronimo Geron. Police said the suspect, who had posed as dollar buyer, sprayed an undetermined chemical on the victim's face while inside his vehicle. Police said the victim claimed she worked part-time as a foreign exchange dealer and had made a previous transaction with the suspect prior to the incident. "Because she had previous dealings with the suspect, she readily boarded the vehicle," police said. But before the transaction could actually take place , police said the suspect allegedly took a canister and sprayed its contents on the victim's face "which made her drowsy." The victim was allegedly dumped by the suspect along N. Domingo corner Valencia St. not far from a police station. The victim, accompanied by her boyfriend, appeared to be distraught and knew little of what happened to her, barely giving details about the suspect and the incident, police said.

New Marikina police chief

THE MARIKINA City police is scheduled to get a new police chief within the week. Eastern Police District Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino told the INQUIRER Col. Sotero Ramos would be replacing Col. Manuel Gaerlan. Sotero is currently chief of the National Capital Region police office regional intelligence special operations office. Alejandrino said Gaerlan would probably be reassigned to Camp Crame. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Pasig mayor sets up new security force

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PASIG CITY MAYOR VICENTE EUSEBIO, who has lost his police powers, has set up a security force directly under his office to implement city ordinances.

The new Batas ng Ciudad Enforcement Unit (BCEU) is composed of 249 operatives.

But city hall officials gave the assurance the unit would only "augment" the local police force.

The unit was formed through a city ordinance passed in March, a few days after the National Police Commission stripped Eusebio of his police powers following his decision to demolish a compound allegedly housing shabu dens five days after police raided the area. The shanties contained what was considered as evidence against suspected operators of the drug dens.

City ordinances

The new security unit will enforce city ordinances, like those against illegal squatting, smoking, littering, gambling, public drinking, electricity theft and illegal drugs.

Assistant head SPO4 Cecilio Santos told the INQUIRER that hiring was ongoing to meet the original plan of having at least 400 operatives for the unit that became fully operational only last Monday.

Rigid screening

"We had rigid screening procedures. We also trained the recruits on city ordinances, as well as traffic management," Santos, a police officer with the City Hall Detachment, said.

The operatives are divided into bike and motorcycle patrollers, mobile patrollers and police precinct patrollers.

They get a monthly allowance of P5,082 each. In the ordinance, which created the group, the city council appropriated more than P41 million to cover the salary and benefits of the enforcement group.

Limited manpower

Eusebio earlier told the INQUIRER the BCEU was his way of helping the local police which, because of limited manpower, could not focus on enforcing city ordinances.

The mayor said the unarmed BCEU operatives could arrest violators of city ordinances.

Pasig City Police chief Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami also confirmed that BCEU operatives were already deployed in the police precincts.

Big help

"They have been a big help to us since our lawmen can now concentrate on fighting street criminals while they (BCEU operatives) take care of local ordinances," Uyami said.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Israel vows to retaliate for rocket attack

Gaza militants fire at center of a major city for the first time

GAZA CITY—PRIME MINISTER EHUD OLMERT PLEDGED stiff retaliation for a rocket attack from Gaza on an Israeli city, the first time militants have reached the heart of a population center, with Israel already stepping up its weeklong offensive in the seaside territory.

Olmert called the rocket fire on the coastal city of Ashkelon Tuesday a "major escalation," coming just hours after a deadline set by the militants holding an Israeli soldier passed with Israel rejecting demands to release Palestinian prisoners.

Early Wednesday, Israeli aircraft targeted the Palestinian Interior Ministry for the second time in a week, the Israeli military said. Witnesses said missiles hit the main structure again and damaged a building next to the ministry. Rescue workers said five people were wounded.

The two top floors of the main building collapsed, and the second building, which provides housing for ministry employees, was set on fire, witnesses said.

In other attacks early Wednesday, Israeli aircraft fired missiles at a Hamas camp in southern Gaza and a Hamas-affiliated school in Gaza City. No one was hurt.

Israel's Security Cabinet was to meet later Wednesday, and Army Radio reported it would approve sending forces into populated parts of northern Gaza in response to the rocket attack. "As far as I'm concerned, the people of (northern Gaza towns) Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya can start packing," said Cabinet Minister Zeev Boim.

The rocket fired by Gaza militants Tuesday flew 12 km and exploded in the courtyard of a school in Ashkelon, a city of 110,000 on Israel's seacoast north of Gaza. School security cameras showed a large cloud of white dust rising from the point of impact. The school was empty at the time and no one was hurt.

Though militants have launched many of the small, homemade rockets in the direction of Ashkelon, this was the first one to hit the center of the city, displaying a longer range than most previous ones and bringing the threat of rocket barrages to a major Israeli population center for the first time. *AP*

Mexico leftist threatens street protests over vote

MEXICO CITY—MEXICO'S LEFT-wing presidential candidate wants every single vote recounted and is threatening to call street protests as he fights an election result giving a razor-thin victory to his conservative rival.

Senior aides to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a combative former mayor of Mexico City, said on Tuesday they want a recount of Sunday's tight election to include every vote cast, not just the ballot returns reported by polling stations.

Lopez Obrador is first taking his challenge to election authorities but the aides said he could then bring out supporters to back his fight against results that just favor his ruling party rival, Felipe Calderon.

"We have full confidence that if the votes are counted, we will win the election," said Manuel Camacho Solis, the leftist's main political operator.

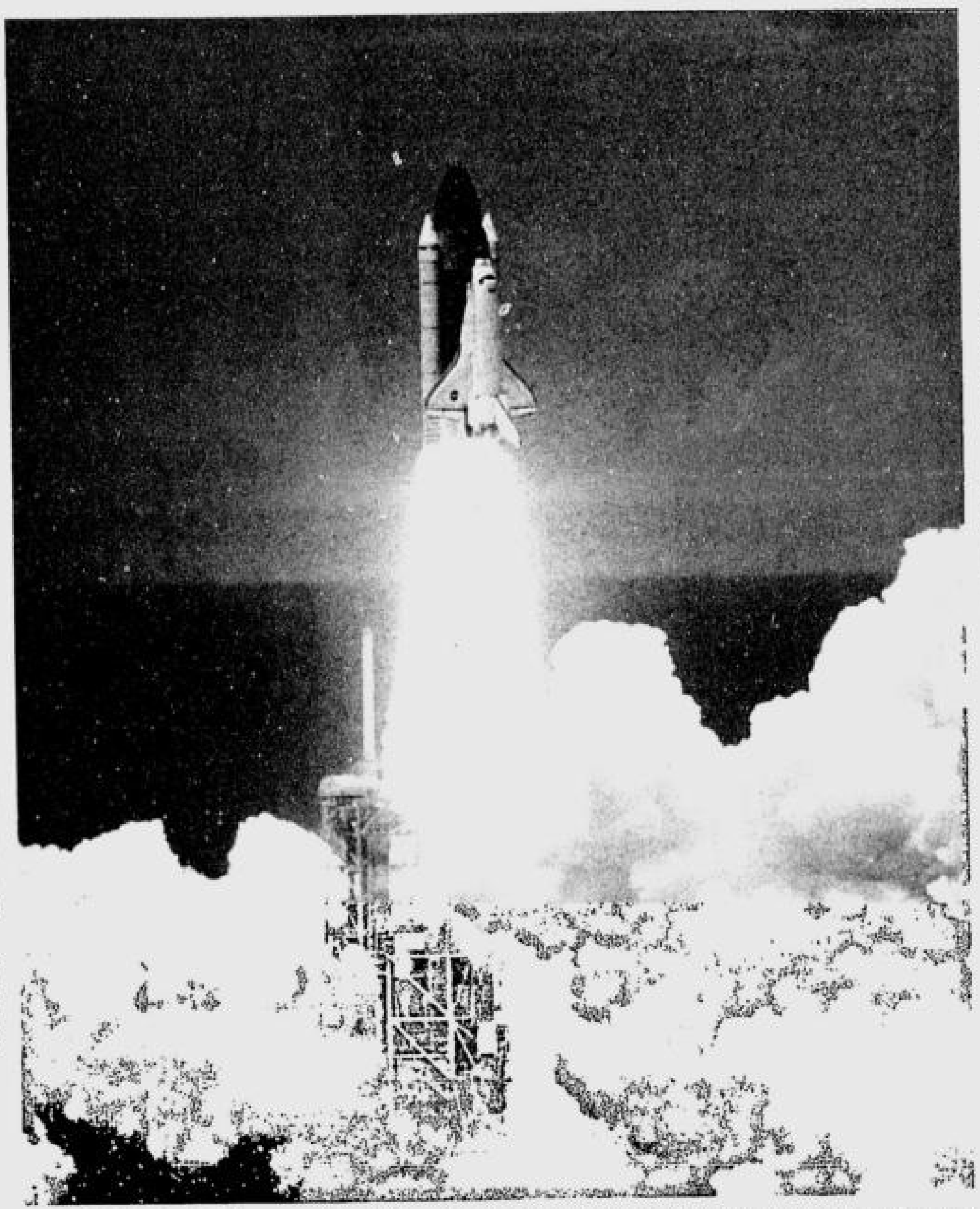
Mexico now faces two months of legal wrangling over the results, and the threat of street protests has raised fears of political unrest in a young democracy that is key to US interests over immigration, drug smuggling and security.

Left-wing militants remember a 1988 election when fraud was almost certainly robbed their candidate of victory and some are pushing Lopez Obrador to take his cause to the streets now.

"People don't want negotiation, they don't want us to accept the result but we have to guide the movement politically so it doesn't end up in a greater confrontation," Camacho Solis told Reuters.

Preliminary returns gave Calderon 36.38 percent of the vote, 1 percentage point or about 400,000 votes ahead of Lopez Obrador, although the Federal Electoral Institute, or IFE, ordered a recount of polling station returns this week.

Lopez Obrador says 3 million votes were not accounted for and he refused to accept the preliminary numbers. *Reuters*



THE SPACE shuttle Discovery lifts off from launch pad 39B at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida July 4. The Discovery shuttle rocketed seven astronauts into orbit on a pivotal mission for US space ambitions amid persistent concerns about safety since the 2003 Columbia tragedy. AFP

Discovery blasts off into space

CAPE CANAVERAL—THE DISCOVERY shuttle rocketed seven astronauts into orbit Tuesday on a pivotal mission for US space ambitions amid persistent concerns about safety since the 2003 Columbia tragedy.

Nasa officials were elated about the flawless launch and later were very pleased with the performance of the shuttle's external fuel tank, whose loss of foam insulation during liftoffs has vexed Nasa since the debris cause Columbia's demise in 2003.

Images showed that Discovery shed small pieces of debris a few minutes after launching at 2:38 p.m., too late to threaten the orbiter, a top Nasa official said. Officials had expected small pieces of debris to peel off.

"The tank performed very well this time," space shuttle program manager Wayne Hale told reporters five hours after Discovery blasted off in a glorious cloud of white smoke from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on US Independence Day.

He said there was no concern for the seven Discovery astronauts' safety in just the second shuttle flight since the Columbia accident.

"We don't seen any concern for the orbiter," Hale said. He said it was unclear if the debris was foam insulation or ice produced by the fuel tank's supercold propellant.

Nasa had cleared the Discovery launch despite finding a small crack in foam insulation on the fuel tank on the eve of the launch. Officials said the fissure posed no threat to the shuttle. *AFP*

2005 Bali blast suspect says he was brainwashed

BALI—AN ISLAMIC MILITANT on trial for the 2005 Bali bombings has admitted to meeting Southeast Asia's most wanted terror suspect ahead of the attacks and creating a website promoting holy war—but claimed he did so only after being brainwashed.

Abdul Azis, 30, told the Denpasar District Court on Tusday that he met Malaysian terror fugitive Noordin Top 10 times in Central Java's Pekalongan village in the months leading up to the Oct. 1 suicide bombings that left 20 people dead.

Azis provided few details, but his indictment said Noordin convinced him to design a website that called on Islamic militants to wage war against infidels and provided details about other terror attacks. Azis was also asked to make a logo for the site and to modify a personal computer so it could be used as a television.

Azis said he did not go to police even though he suspected the man was Noordin—wanted for a string of al-Qaida-linked terrorist attacks across the predominantly Muslim nation—because his persuasive powers were too great to resist.

"I do not agree with suicide bombing or fighting against other religions," said Azis, one of four defendants facing trial for the bombings on three crowded restaurants. "Maybe he was using black magic. He has an extraordinary charisma... more than my father." *AP*

Iraqi deputy minister freed after 10-hour kidnapping

BAGHDAD—AN IRAQI DEPUTY MINISTER and his 19 bodyguards were kidnapped by gunmen in broad daylight Tuesday and held for 10 hours before being released. It was the second high-profile abduction in a week despite a massive security crackdown in Baghdad.

Iraqi Justice Minister Hashem al-Shibli, meanwhile, called for United Nations intervention in the probe into an alleged rape and murder of a woman and three members of her family by US soldiers in March. The US military also said Tuesday it killed an al-Qaida operative suspected of bombing a bustling Shiite market in Baghdad last week that left 66 people dead in one of the worst attacks this year.

Deputy Electricity Minister Raad al-Hareth and his bodyguards were in four cars when they were ambushed by gunmen wearing security forces uniforms in the eastern Baghdad neighborhood of Talbiyah, a security official said.

At 7 p.m., Hareth was released together with seven of his bodyguards—but he refused to say who had taken him or where he had been.

It was the second high-profile abduction within a week after Sunni female MP Taiseer Najeh Awad al-Mashhadani and her eight bodyguards were snatched on Saturday in Baghdad.

Mashhadani belongs to the National Concord Front, the largest Sunni Arab bloc in Iraq's 275-member parliament. Demanding her release, the Sunni bloc has boycotted parliamentary proceedings for the past three days. *AFP*

RAIN MASTER

Indonesian mystic Haryobintoro Tjakra performs a ritual rite at his house in Jakarta, June 29. Tjakra is one of Jakarta's most powerful "pawang hujan," rain master, keeping the clouds at bay for pop concerts, weddings for Indonesia's rich and famous and even team building sessions. AFP

World powers await Iran's response to nuclear offer

BRUSSELS—THE EU'S TOP diplomat and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator were to hold potentially pivotal talks here Wednesday on whether Tehran might be prepared to curb its nuclear ambitions.

The talks between EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana and negotiator Ali Larijani are expected to explore whether Iran is ready to accept a package of economic and political incentives in exchange for suspending uranium enrichment.

Some in the West fear that the Islamic republic is trying to covertly develop nuclear weapons under the guise of a civilian atomic programme, but the government in Tehran maintains that it only wants to generate electricity.

The meeting in Brussels, scheduled to begin at 5:00 pm , comes almost a month to the day after Solana delivered the nuclear offer, drawn up by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

It is a diplomatic route chosen after the United States and its allies struggled to convince China and Russia to boost the powers of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after Iran defied the UN's nuclear watchdog.

Amid increasingly heated rhetoric, Solana, who will hold talks with officials from the six world powers before and after meeting Larijani, expects the meeting to provide a first clear sign about Iran's intentions.

"We have to make sure that the Iranians have clearly understood what we are offering them, and that they get answers if they have questions," his spokesperson, Cristina Gallach, said Tuesday.

"The clearer their response is, the quicker we will be able to go toward negotiations," she said, but added that any substantial talks at the level of experts would be unlikely before September.

That could come as bad news for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had hoped to announce the start of negotiations at a meeting of the Group of Eight industrial powers in Saint Petersburg next week.

Iran is unlikely to accept being bullied into meeting any deadline.

Larijani was quoted Tuesday as saying that his government might be ready to respond to the offer in early August, while Iran's hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has set Aug. 22 as a date. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

40th bird flu death in Indonesia

JAKARTA—Indonesia is on track to record the world's highest number of fatalities from bird flu, after health officials confirmed Tuesday that a five-year-old boy was the country's 40th victim of the virus. Tests for the H5N1 virus on the latest victim carried out by a World Health Organization-linked laboratory came back positive, senior health ministry official Hariyadi Wibisono told AFP. "Results from tests on a five-year-old boy from Tulungagung, East Java, have been confirmed by the WHO-affiliated laboratory in Hong Kong," he said, adding that the boy had died after eight days of hospital treatment. "Reports suggest that he had been in contact with dead chickens," he said. ***AFP***

Spain rail crash blamed on excess speed

VALENCIA—Excess speed caused a fatal metro train accident in the Spanish city of Valencia, a regional minister said Tuesday, and there are suggestions the train driver may have been ill or unconscious at the controls. At the moment of the accident on Monday, in which 41 people died, the black box recorder showed the train was travelling "too fast", at 80 km on a curve on which there is a speed limit of 40 km an hour, regional Infrastructure Minister Jose Ramon Garcia Anton told reporters in Valencia. "All other possibilities (to explain the accident) are ruled out, " he said. ***AFP***

CIA disbands anti-bin Laden unit

WASHINGTON—The CIA has disbanded a unit set up in the 1990s to oversee the spy agency's hunt for Osama bin Laden and transferred its duties to broader operations that track Islamist militant groups, a US intelligence official said on Tuesday, The Bin Laden unit, codenamed Alec Station, became less valuable as a separate operation as counterterrorism operations eliminated top al-Qaida operatives and the movement's focus shifted more to regional networks of militants, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Al-Qaida is no longer the hierarchical organization that it was before 9-11. Three-quarters of its senior leaders have been killed or captured," said the official, referring to the US-led response to the Sept. 11 attacks. ***Reuters***

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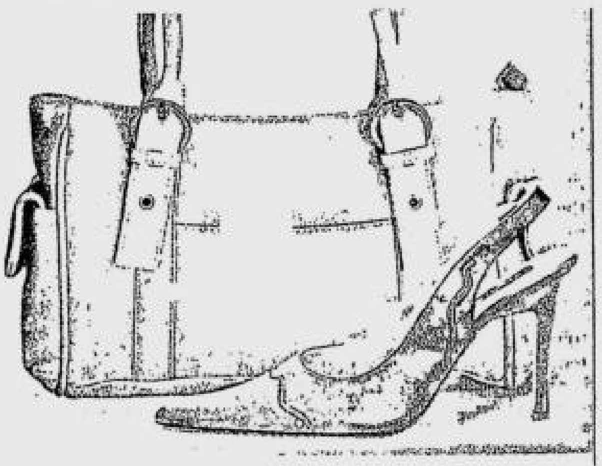

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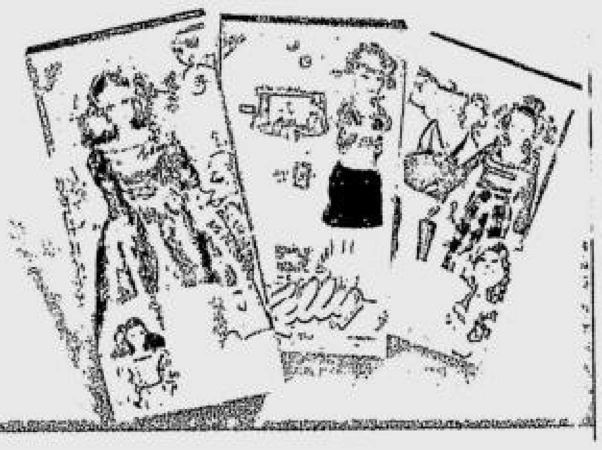

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▨ **Top women** seeds book Wimbledon semis tickets /A24

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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FIFA WORLD CUP SEMIFINAL
SPORTSPLUS
9 a.m.—Portugal vs France (replay @ 9 p.m.)
RPN-9
5 a.m.—Portugal vs France

Italy ousts host Germany with two late goals

DORTMUND, GERMANY—FOR NEARLY two hours, Germany probed, Italy held firm and penalty kicks seemed inevitable.

Then with two stunningly swift strikes in the last two minutes, Italy unraveled it all—the tension, the match, the Germans' dream of lifting the World Cup trophy in Berlin.

First came the left-footed shot that Fabio Grosso twisted into the far side of the net in the 119th minute. Then Alessandro Del Piero clinched the 2-0 win a minute later with a counterattacking goal as the Germans pressed frantically to equalize.

"Italy deserved to win," Italy coach Marcello Lippi said. "We controlled the play more than Germany did and, in the end, we got these two great goals, which allowed us to avoid the roulette of a penalty shoot-out."

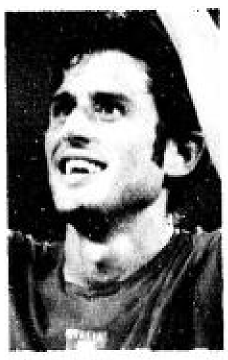
Tuesday's win came as scandal tears apart the national sport back home. But an investigation into match-fixing has not proven a distraction—the Italians keep plowing through soccer's premier event, allowing only a single own-goal in six games.

Now the Italians head to Berlin for Sunday's final in search of their fourth title. They'll play the winner of Wednesday's Portugal-France match.

"We have a great group," Grosso said. "We've beaten some very good teams."

Not least Germany, a squad that was supposed to be too young and inexperienced to challenge for this trophy, yet performed superbly.

DEL PIERO AFP



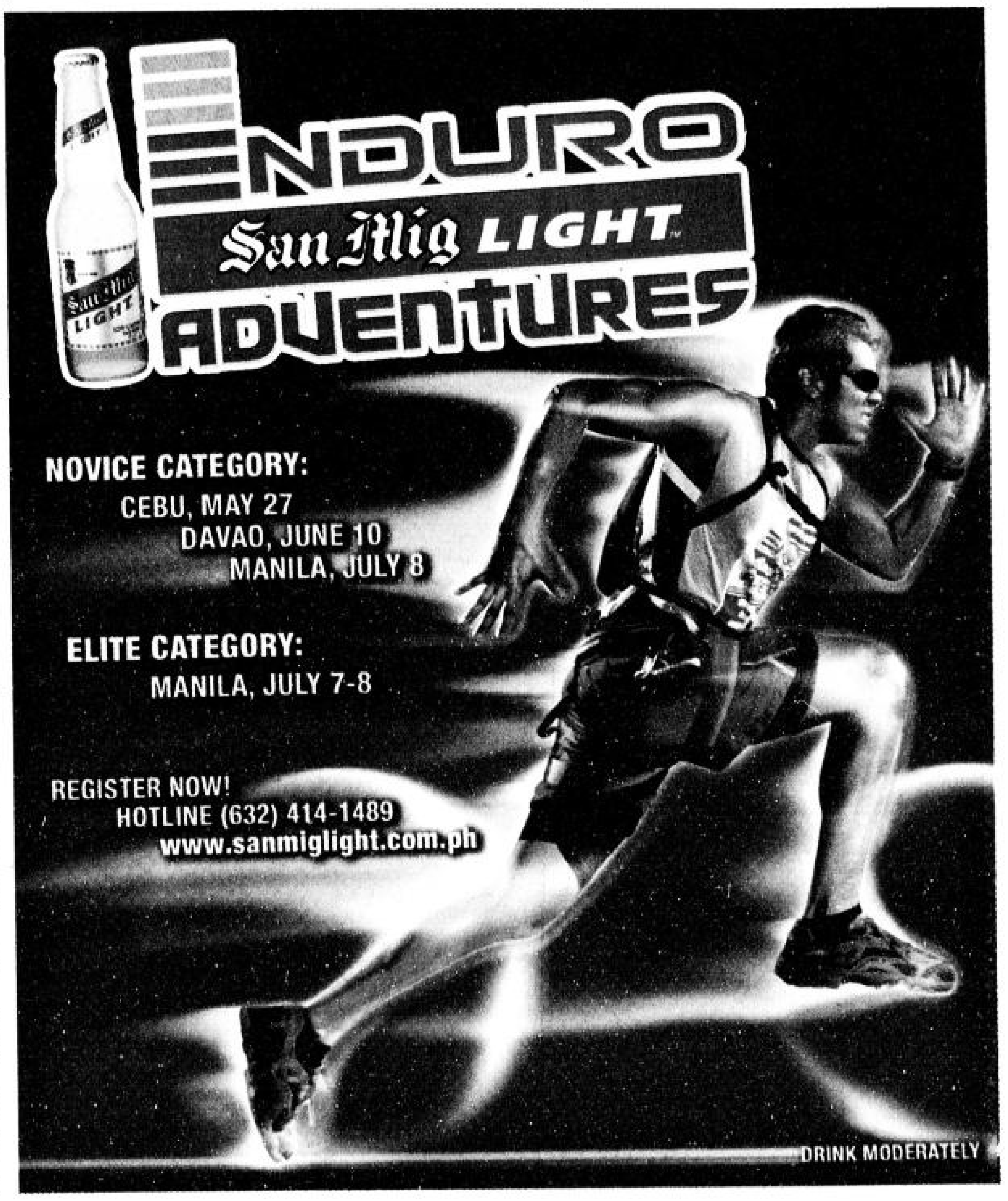
GROSSO AP

In handing the Germans their first loss in 15 games at Dortmund, the Azzurri also remained undefeated in five World Cup meetings with Germany—this was their third win to go with two draws. Italy is unbeaten in 24 games since October 2004.

The swift end to this one was stunning. Germany had pressured for the game's last hour and slowly stretched the tight Italian defense.

As Italy tired, Germany captain Michael Ballack directed the attack. The Germans found room where before there was none, creating space—and chances.

In the 63rd minute, Lukas Podolski received the ball with his back to the goal, then turned and fired. Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon parried ball and Arne Friedrich rocketed a rebound shot over the bar. *AP*



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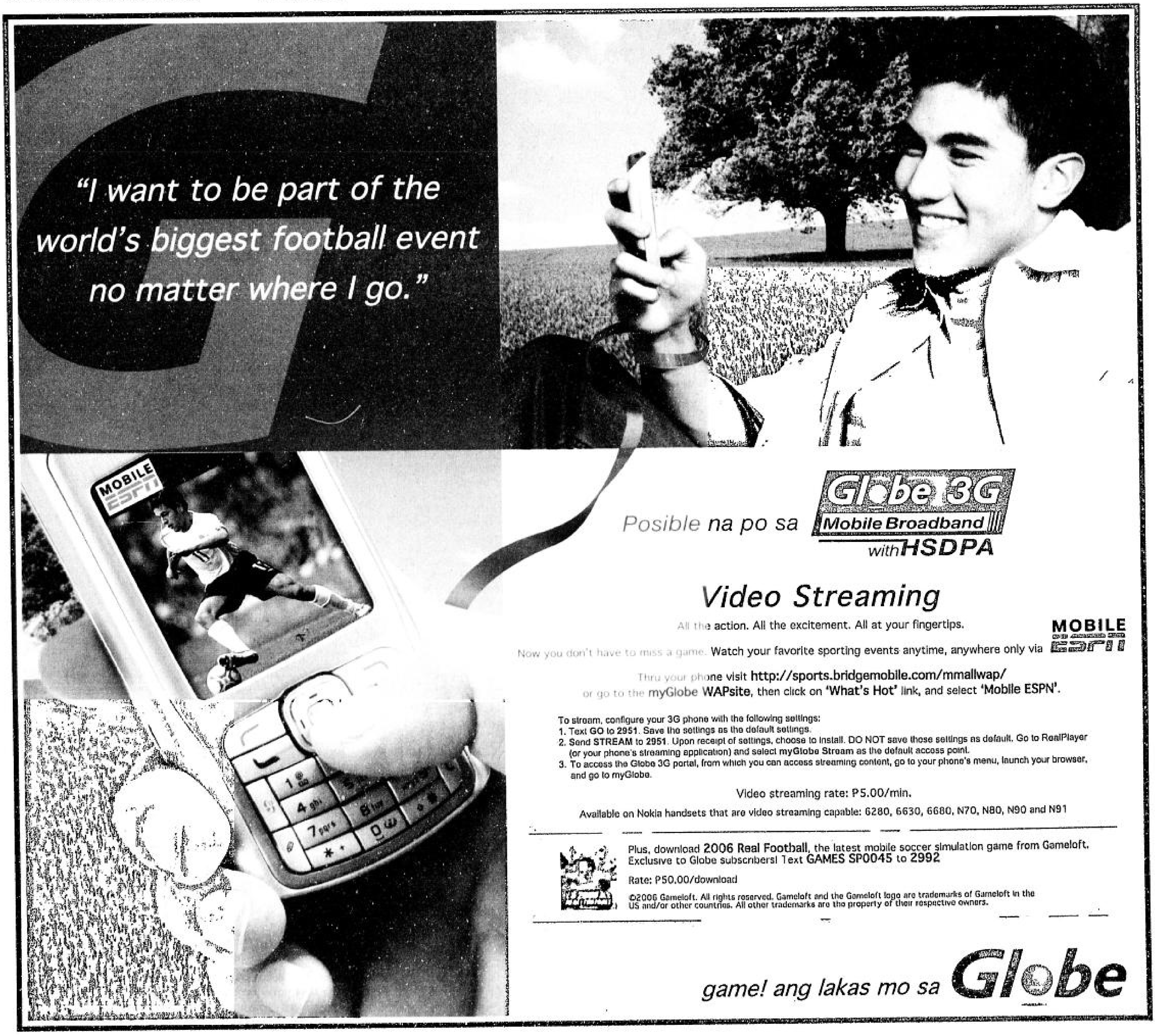

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game! ang lakas mo sa Globe

Alaska bags 11th third place trophy

By June Navarro

MIKE CORTEZ DIDN'T LET ALASKA'S semifinal debacle ruin his entire season.

Cortez redeemed himself following a mediocre performance in Game 7 of the semifinals by leading the Aces to a 102-95 win over the San Miguel Beermen last night in their battle for third place in the Gran Matador Brandy PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The former La Salle standout fired 25 points, including eight straight in the closing minutes as the Aces rallied for the victory that somehow erased the memory of their painful semis loss to Purefoods.

"It (the loss to Purefoods) was very humbling, painful and mystifying," said Alaska coach Tim Cone after steering the Aces to their 11th second-runner-up trophy. "But how we got there was something I was proud of."

The Aces were ranked third after the classification round and booted out the Coca-Cola Tigers in the quarterfinals to advance into the semis where they led the best-of-seven series, 3-1.

Then the Giants pulled off an almost improbable three-game sweep to set up a championship clash with Red Bull.

"It happens in a basketball game. You have a good run then you suddenly hit a brick wall and it's devastating at times," said Cone, whose contract with the Aces will expire at month's end. Every thing is still up in the air until the 11-time champion coach sits down with management any time soon.

The scores:

ALASKA 102—Cortez 26, Cariaso 24, Belasco 17, Dela Cruz 13, Ferriols 7, Wilson 6, Lauro 6, Thoss 4, Hawkins 0, Miller 0.

SAN MIGUEL 95—Pena 22, Cablay 13, Adriano 12, Gonzales 11, Hontiveros 11, Racela 9, Calaguio 9, Noble 4, Lopez 2, Ildefonso 2.

Quarters: 31-24, 46-47, 77-78, 102-95.

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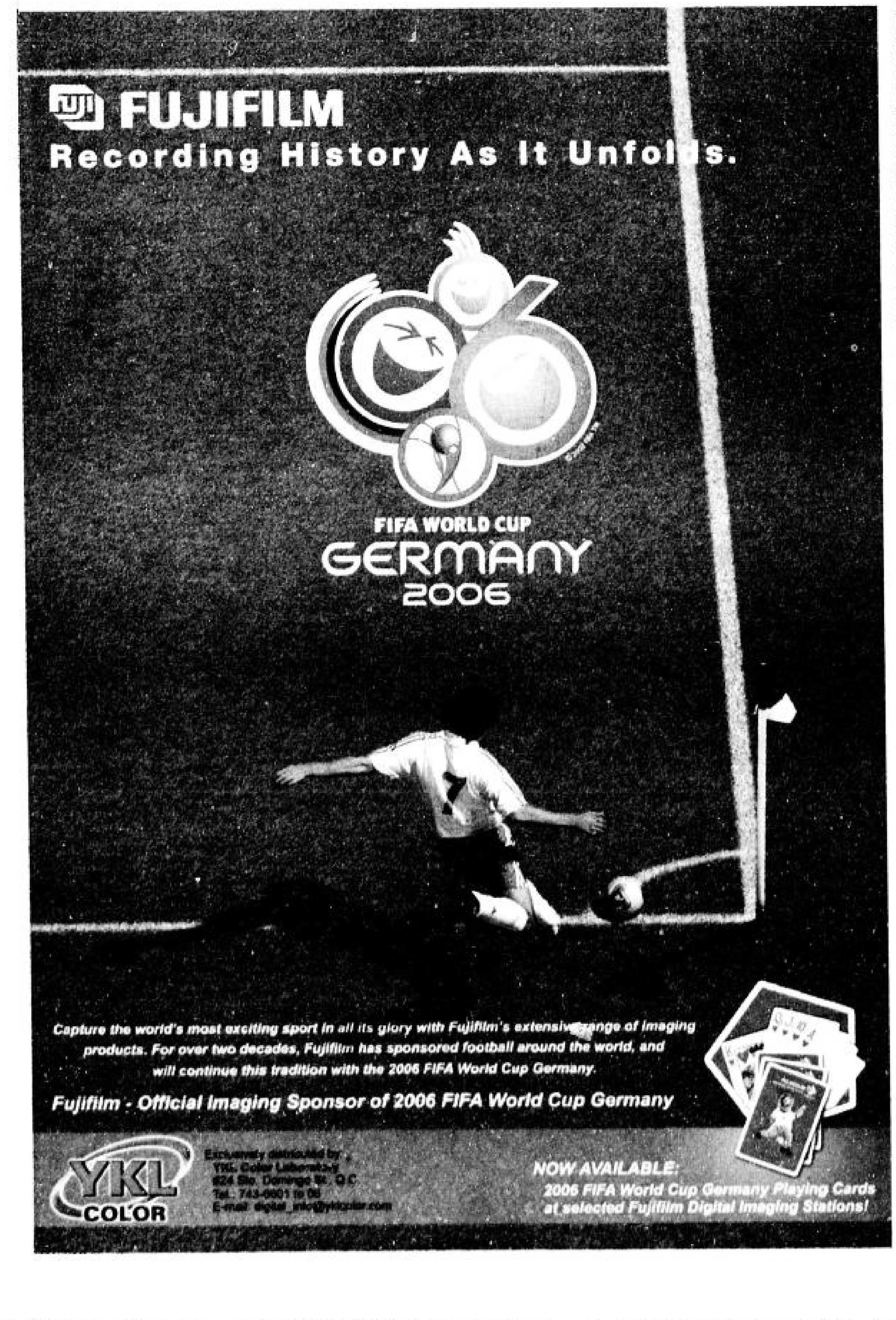

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Tagaytay hosts NBC semis

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE FOUR BEST NORTHern and southern division teams in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship begin their best-of-three crossover semifinal series today at the International Convention Center here.

Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Batang Tagaytay will test defending champion Ozamiz Cotta Shrine at 1:30 p.m. while the Spring Cooking Oil-Parañaque cagers of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana will go up against expansion team Pagadian at 3:30.

The Cotta Shrine cagers of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog are slightly favored over the hosts. The Cooking Oil Masters and Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers are expected to figure in a nip-and-tuck contest.

Games 2—and 3, if necessary—in the series will be played in the south (Ozamiz and Pagadian).

This is the first time in the tourney that the top two teams in two divisions were pitted against each other. In the past, the top teams dispute the division titles with the winners clashing for the NBC national crown.

"This way, the champion team can proudly say it's truly the best," said NBC sec gen Tito Palma of the innovation in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring, Molten, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings and Prime Channel.

Ozamiz pins its hopes on Marlon Basco and Billy Bansil while Nino Marquez, Arden Guiyab and Rodel Mallari lead Tagaytay.

Marvin Ortiguerra, Larry Rodriguez, Danny Capobres, Aldrin Morante and Mar Reyes banner Spring-Parañaque while ex-pros Peter Naron, Michael Orquillas and Bong Marata will carry the load for the Explorers.

Gomez joining IPT qualifying

GOMEZ

ROBERTO GOMEZ, DUBBED AS "Superman" because of his steely nerves in money games, will compete in a qualifying event of the International Pool Tour on Aug. 1-8 at Corpus Christi in Texas.

The qualifiers will advance to the main draw on Sept. 2-10 at Reno Hilton in Reno, Nevada. All qualifiers are assured of at least $5,000 while the IPT winner will get $350,000.

"It's a big honor to be invited to a big event in the US. I just hope I will be as lucky as my stablemates," said Gomez, who belongs to a group, which includes Dennis Orcollo, Gandy Valle and Ronnie Alcano, supported by businessman Perry Mariano.

"I hope he gets his US visa in time," said Mariano, noting that Orcollo and Gabica took some time to get their visas.

Pichay chess slated

GRANDMASTER Mark Paragua and International Master Oliver Dimakiling are among those joining the 3rd Prospero Pichay Sr. Memorial open chess tournament slated Aug. 12-14 in Cantilan, Surigao del Sur. Paragua, the country's highest-ranked player and Dimakiling, back-to-back champion of the Olympic Festival and the recent Ozamiz Chess Open, have signified their intention to join the tournament honoring the late father of National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Congressman Prospero "Butch" Pichay. The organizing Friends of Pichay bared that a total of P100,000 will be at stake in the nine-round Swiss System tournament. Also expected to join the event slated before Cantilan's town fiesta on Aug. 15 are IM Bario Nadera and NM Emmanuel Senador, second and third, respectively, in Ozamiz. Tournament director Cesar Caturla said prizes will be broken down to the top 15. Call Caturla at 0928-7132397.

Escoses in semis

TOP-RANKED LLOYD Escoses and former champion Ian Piencenaves arranged a semifinal showdown in the men's division of the elite masters of the JVC Open Badminton Championships after pulling off contrasting victories at Glorietta, Makati City yesterday. Escoses, a Far Eastern University standout, overwhelmed Owen Lopez of BCMI with a variety of shots and power game for a 21-12, 21-14 victory. Piencenaves, who ruled this tournament in 2003, bested PAF's Rodel Bartolome, 21-13, 16-21, 21-14.

Petron taekwondo goes to Marbel

AROUND 600 MALE AND FEMALE JINS ARE EXPECTED TO VIE FOR honors in the Petron Mindanao Taekwondo Championships set on July 8 in Marbel, South Cotabato. Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado said the event will coincide with the staging of the city's T'nalak Festival. Organizing committee chair Robert Joshua Danao said the event, supported by Petron, Accel and Philippine Sports Commission, is part of PTA's grassroots program. The event will be featured on Taekwondo TV hosted by Monsour del Rosario and John Paul Lizardo every Sunday from 9:30 to 10 a.m. over RPN 9.

RP Hiso Cycling Cup set in Baras

PHILIPPINE TEAM MEMBERS AND RIDERS FROM CONTINENTAL TRADE TEAM will join the second edition of the RP Hiso Cycling Cup Bike Rush in Baras on Saturday in front of the Baras Municipal Hall. Tace organizer-sports patron Rolando Hiso said cash prizes and trophies are at stake for the 60-km event managed by race director Berting Rosales, Wilbur Dee and chair Rudy Francisco of Marikina Cycling Club. The event, hosted by Baras Mayor Willie Robles, Vice Mayor Armingol Pilapil and councilors Ramos Matignas, Mario Mendoza, Eman Olaño, Renato Llagas, Nick Llagas, Jojo Elago and Edgar Follente and Barangay League's Wilmer Elago, serves as a qualifier for the international cycling meet in the US.

LPC Fastest Win event today

LAS PIÑAS COLISEUM'S FASTEST WIN ONE-COCK *ULUTAN* STARTS AT 8 A.M. today with more than 200 small-time cockers and breeders vying for the guaranteed prize of P200,000. Due to the big number of fights, the event will be extended until midnight, according to coliseum manager Alex Tobias. Today's hosts are Dandan and Monching Ignacio of Cavite. Lined up at LPC tomorrow is the Kumbidahan Hackfight to be hosted by Danny Alejo. Meanwhile, the annual Las Piñas 6-stag derby will be held on Aug. 24 and 26 with former Mayor Nene Aguilar as host. For details, call 8731040 and 8743910.

Roligon derby round three up

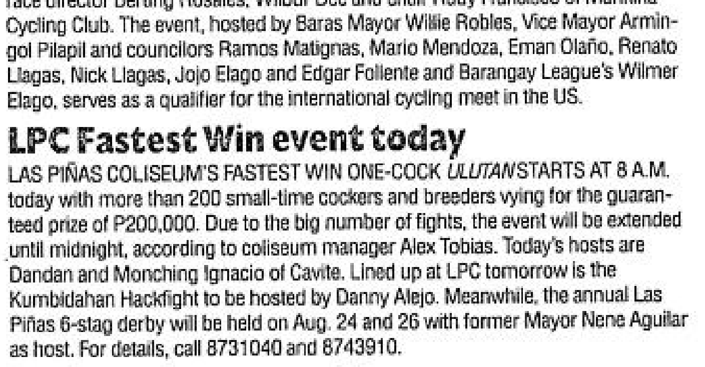
ROUND THREE OF ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT'S HATAWAN SA TAG- ULAN 6-cock derby rages at 5 p.m. today with 80 fights lined up. After two days of action, 33 participants with two points each have qualified to the championship round on July 11. Those who earned two wins last Tuesday were Capt. Emil Chua (Concrete Breaker), Lito Tiu (Michael Farms), Osang dela Cruz (Goldquest Champions), Boy Marzo (DMRR), Terry Santos (King Rafael), Rep. Conrad Estrella (Constar 888), James Wolf (Magic Touch Bagong Silang), Princess Naldo (XR 88) and Marcel Julao (MTJ Bros). Backed by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone, this derby stakes P3.5M. Call 8512275, 8331638 and 8529812 (Shirley or Jonna).

Big prizes in Sta. Ana cockfest

BIG PRIZES AWAIT THE WINNERS IN THE FASTEST WIN ONE- COCK ulutan at Sta. Ana Cockpit (A. P. Reyes Avenue, Makati City) on Saturday. More than 100 entries are expected, said host Amor Salvanera who put up a guaranteed prize of P100,000. Registration fee is P1,100. The fastest win champion will receive P30,000. Last July 1, 158 entries were registered in the Fastest Win One – Cock Ulutan hosted by pit manager Butchoy Olano. For info, call 898 -3474 and 898 -3475.

Fil-Ams join Korea beach volley

THE PHILIPPINES' SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES BRONZE MEDAL WINNING PAIR of Fil-Americans Heidi Ilustre and Diane Pascua will compete in the Korea Beach Volleyball Tournament in a bid to earn points that will qualify them to the 2008 Beijing Olympics in China. National Beach Volley head coach Otie Camangian said Ilustre and Pascua were able to get a slot in the all-first world country beach volley tournament, an FIVB satellite beach volleyball circuit. "It was actually an all 1st world country team tournament," said Camangian. "The reason why our team was able to participate was because of Diane's friend in the US who informed her of the tournament in Korea."



WINNERS: IVAN Carapiet (third from left), winner of the second round of the 2006 Rotax Invitational Challenge held at the Carmona Racing Circuit , with (from left) Stefano Marcelo, fifth; Alessandra Madrigal, third; Daniel Cleak, second; and Marlon Stockinger, fourth.

Knights dump Bombers; Dolphins repulse Altas

By Marc Anthony Reyes

LETRAN SURVIVED A BIG FOURTH-quarter scare to escape with a 74-70 decision over Jose Rizal University yesterday for its third straight win in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The defending champion Knights saw their 12-point advantage reduce to 70-72, with only 4.3 seconds to go on free throws by Carlos Fenequito then Bomber Floyd Dedicatoria forced a jump on Rafael Jazul with just 1.1 seconds remaining.

But JRU blew its chance when John Wilson threw away the inbound. Veteran point guard Boyet Bautista was fouled on the next play and his two charities finalized the count.

Later in the day, Lei Mar Navarro hit two free throws in the last three seconds as Philippine Christian University edged Perpetual, 66-63, for its third straight win.

The Dolphins improved to 3-1 and took solo second spot. The Altas absorbed their second loss in three games while the Bombers still stood last at 0-2.

Earlier, the Light Bombers downed the Squires in a high-scoring game, 110-98, to stay on top with two wins in as many outings. The Squires fell to 0-3.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*Ninoy Aquino*)
12 nn.—St. Benilde vs SSC-R (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—Mapua vs San Beda

The scores:

Second Game (Srs)

LETRAN 74—Bautista 16, Aban 15, Balneg 14, Jazul 7, Daa 6, Mondragon 5, Dangcal 5, Quinday 2, Realista 2, Faundo 2.

JRU 70—Wilson 15, Dedicatoria 13, Fenequito 9, Nocom 8, Sena 7, Pradas 6, Cagoco 6, Hayes 4, Se 2, Pria 0, caspe 0, Bucao 0.

Quarters: 9-14, 30-34, 53-51, 74-70.

Third Game (Srs)

PCU 66—Navarro 19, Espinas 13, Castro 9, Amparado 8, David 6, Garrido 4, Belga 4, Santos 2, Graham 2, Salem 0.

PERPETUAL 63—Bauzon 32, Misa 16, Joe 8, Reyes 5, Kong 2, Mendoza 0, Manuel 0, Lee 0.

Quarters: 13-21, 29-39, 48-54, 66-63.

BOYET Bautista of Letran slips past Marc Terence Gacoco of JRU yesterday.
PDI PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

Hillsborough tops Nokia Cup

HILLSBOROUGH ASSEMBLED A 288 aggregate to beat La Vista at the close of the 2006 Nokia Cup intervillage golf tournament at Cangolf's south course Tuesday.

Nicolas Camcam finished with the maximum 40 points to lead Hillsborough in the Stableford scoring system of the 36-hole elimination round. Philip Brodett and Edward Puno tossed in 39 points apiece, while Vic Guzman and Derick Gamboa posted 38 points each.

Rounding up the team scores were Rene Cuchon (34), Greg Atienza (30) and Danny Olanosa (30). Hillsborough pooled a 288 for a 593 total as it ruled the Nokia 2 of the three-division meet among the golfing villages in the metropolis. La Vista shot the day's best score of 290, but settled for second place with a 589 total. Third-placer Tahanan (274-569) and Xavierville (279-547) also advanced to the finals.

HK-China halts RP jr shuttlers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES' WINNING RUN IN THE team event ended Tuesday night following a 3-0 loss to Hong Kong-China in the fourth round of the Asian junior badminton championships in Kuala Lumpur.

After posting shutout victories in the first three rounds, the RP shuttlers found their match in the Chinese players who played at a level way above the Filipino youngsters.

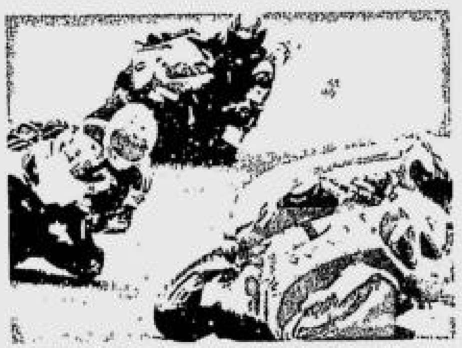
Kevin Tim Ang surrendered a 14-21, 12-21 decision to Wong Shu Ki in the boys' singles and Raquel Guerrero lost to Chan Tsz Ka, 11-21, 11-21, in the girls' singles. Bryan Chan and Rachel Guerrero fell to Lau Chi Yin and Yeung Hiu Tung, 23-25, 15-21, in the mixed doubles.

"We only have modest expectations in this tournament because all the best young players in the region are here," said RP head coach Errol Chan. "At least our guys were able to range themselves against the best players and now we know where we stand."

The Philippines routed Jordan, Cambodia and Pakistan in the first three rounds which, according to Chan, is an achievement in itself considering that the RP shuttlers don't get to compete internationally as often as their rivals.

The Philippines scored a 5-0 win over Pakistan Monday night.

Ang whipped Mukad Ali, 21-15, 21-11, in the boys' singles before Raquel Guerrero ripped Sara Khan, 21-11, 21-7, in the girls' side. Ang and Chan teamed up for a 21-14, 21-17 victory over Murad Ali and Zaran in the boys' doubles.



DEFENDING champion Jolet Jao (No. 1) paces Benjo Mendoza (No. 100) and Rod Chua (No. 8) as they negotiate a turn .

Jao posts second Superbike sweep

ROSARIO, BATANGAS -- DEFENDING CHAMPion Jolet Jao of Shell Advance-Kawasaki scored another sweep at the expense of Benjo Mendoza of Speedeffex recently in the second leg of the 2006 Shell Advance-San Mig Coffee Superbikes Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Mendoza led from the fourth lap up to the penultimate ninth, only to be overtaken by Jao at the backstretch. Jao clocked 15 minutes and 36.019, just a second ahead of Mendoza in the race sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association.

Rod Chua, who'll represent the country in the Asian Road Race of Nations this weekend, checked in third while Wacky del Rosario and Randy Ortiz ended fourth and fifth, respectively.

Jao displayed his true form in the afternoon race where he moved beyond Mendoza's reach.

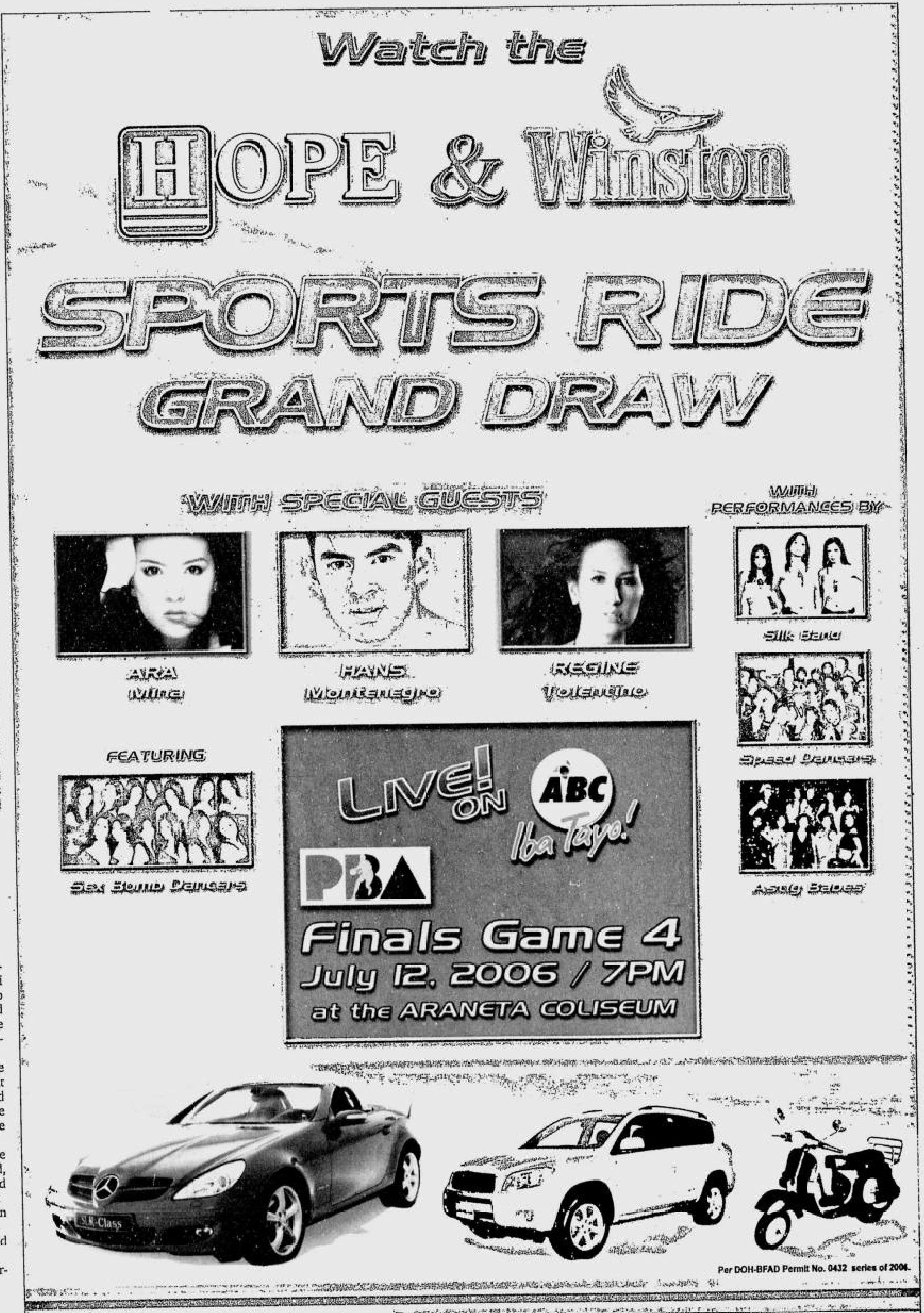
Chua took third place while Del Rosario and Bernardo Mendoza wound up fourth and fifth.

John Diego also pulled a sweep over Jay Carrion in the Intermediate division.

Bata, Django join China exhibition

FILIPINO POOL ICONS EFREN "BATA" REYES and Francisco "Django" Bustamante will represent the Philippines in the 2006 SMB six-man exhibition leg on July 16 in Guangzhou, China. They will be pitted against defending World Pool champion 16-year-old Wu Chia-Ching of Chinese-Taipei, 2006 SMB Asian 9-ball tour Ho Chi Minh leg runner-up Li He Wen, national team coach Xu Meng and women's champion Pan Xiao Ting of China. Star Sports will air highlights of the event on July 23 at 7 p.m.

Marlon Bernardino



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Top women seeds book semis tickets

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WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—THE WIMBLEDON seeding committee got this one just right.

The top four seeded players have advanced to the women's semifinals at Wimbledon: No. 1 Amelie Mauresmo, No. 2 Kim Clijsters, No. 3 Justine Henin-Hardenne and No. 4 Maria Sharapova.

It's only the fifth time in 25 years that the semis have featured the elite four.

On Thursday, 2004 champion Sharapova will play Mauresmo, and Clijsters will face Henin-Hardenne in the 20th career match between the Belgian rivals.

"It just shows how long our careers have been already and how consistent we both have been," Clijsters said.

Clijsters leads Henin-Hardenne 10-9, not counting Henin-Hardenne's two victories in lower-tier events in 1998 and 1999. Henin-Hardenne has won three of the last four, including at the French Open and Eastbourne grass-court tournament last month.

This will be their first meeting at Wimbledon. Henin-Hardenne leads 4-2 at other Grand Slams.

"It will be the third time in a month, so I think that we know each other well enough," Henin-Hardenne said. "But never here in Wimbledon. I don't know what to expect about that. I'm just going to try to keep the same preparation, nothing different from what I did in the last few weeks. The best will win."

Neither player has lost a set in five matches at this tournament. Clijsters beat China's Li Na, 6-4, 7-5, in the quarterfinals on Tuesday, while Henin-Hardenne downed French qualifier Severine Bremond, 6-4, 6-4.

Henin-Hardenne reached her first Grand Slam final here in 2001, losing to Venus Williams. Since then she has won the French Open three times and the US Open and Australian Open once each. If she wins Wimbledon, she'll complete a career Grand Slam of all four major titles.

Only nine women have accomplished the feat, including Serena Williams, Steffi Graf, Chris Evert, Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova.

Sharapova is the only former women's champion left after the exits of Venus Williams and Martina Hingis.

Sharapova beat Elena Dementieva, 6-1, 6-4, in a match briefly interrupted by a male streaker in the second set. Mauresmo beat Anastasia Myskina, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

Mauresmo has a 2-0 edge against Sharapova, both straight-sets wins on hard courts.

Mauresmo, who turns 27 on Wednesday, lost in the semifinals at her three previous Wimbledons.

"I don't think I have anything to prove to myself, first of all, or to anybody," Mauresmo said. "I just want more." *AP*

SPECTATORS help Erik Dekker of the Netherlands, lying on road at right, after he crashed, along with Fred Rodriguez of the US during the third stage. The already depleted Tour lost another favorite, Alejandro Valverde, in the crash. AP

Crashes further deplete field of Tour de France

VALVERDE: Out again REUTERS

VALKENBURG, NETHERLANDS—Wheels touch. Bikes and riders go down. A bone breaks. Tour de France over.

So it went for Alejandro Valverde during an accident-strewn third stage on Tuesday. The Spaniard, whom Lance Armstrong once said could be cycling's next big thing, fractured his right collarbone, taking yet another favorite out of the showpiece race which already lost its top contenders to a doping scandal even before it began.

On the road, there was a new overall leader, Tom Boonen, who donned the Tour's yellow jersey over the rainbow-striped world champion's shirt he already owns. Matthias Kessler of Germany won the hilly stage that covered three countries—Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Boonen will wear yellow in his native Belgium on Wednesday's stage four.

He holds a one-second lead over Australian Michael Rogers. American George Hincapie is third, with previous leader Thor Hushovd slipping back to fourth after he struggled on the final hill of the 216.5-kilometer route from Esch-sur-Alzette.

But crashes were unfortunate themes of the day. Doctors were busy.

American Fred Rodriguez's Fourth of July holiday finished in a hospital emergency unit. A pothole ended his sixth Tour, one of his teammates said. Rodriguez injured his right shoulder and wrist and sustained a concussion.

Dutch rider Erik Dekker apparently hit the same hole, his Rabobank team said, catapulting him over his handlebars onto the road. He broke teeth, ripped his upper lip, had multiple deep cuts on his face and sustained a concussion. A four-time stage winner, he had been riding his 12th Tour.

"Some of the guys thought he was dead," team spokesman Jacob Bergsma said.

Valverde will now return to Spain, where he may need surgery. He plowed into a teammate's wheel when the pack of riders slowed sharply, hitting the road.

His first Tour last year finished no better: After impressing Armstrong by beating him up a climb in the Alps, Valverde was forced to drop out in tears three days later with an inflamed left knee. *AP*

Viloria defends WBC light fly title Aug. 10

WORLD BOXING COUNCIL LIGHT flyweight champion Brian Viloria will defend his title on Aug. 10 against Mexican Omar Nino Romero at the Orleans Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

It will be the 25-year-old Viloria's second title defense after a unanimous decision win over Jose Antonio Aguirre last Feb. 18.

The winner of the Viloria-Romero bout will stake the title against a mandatory challenger, who will be decided on July 18 when top-rated Filipino Juanito Rubillar takes on Thailand's Wandee Singwangcha, the No. 2 contender, in a 12-round eliminator to be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Viloria suffered a broken arm against Aguirre, and could not immediately comply with his mandatory obligation to face Rubillar. The WBC then decided to hold an eliminator with Singwangcha winning the purse bid.

The 30-year-old Romero, who hails from Guadalajara, Mexico, is ranked No. 13 by the WBC, and holds a 23-2-1 win-loss-draw record with 10 KOs.

In the chief support, Filipino Diosdado Gabi sees action for the first time since his failed attempt at the IBF flyweight title.

The card is being presented by Top Rank Promotions in association with the Orleans Hotel and Casino. National television coverage will be provided by Versus formally known as the "outdoor living network."

Top Rank recently entered into a multimillion-dollar 12 fight card agreement with Versus television.

Salven Lagumbay, contributor

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sm city batangas • sm city pampanga • sm city baguio VISAYAS: sm city cebu • sm city mandurriao iloilo • sm city delgado iloilo MINDANAO: sm city cagayan de oro • sm city davao

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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FAP sets show

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE FILM Academy of the Philippines (FAP) is going ahead with the 24th Luna Awards in September despite financial problems, says actor Leo Martinez, FAP director general.

Martinez told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview that the awards would push through, even if its subsidy from the Metro Manila Film Festival revenues had been slashed from 30 to 10 percent.

Martinez said the selection process had gone on as scheduled. "From among the cited works, the nominators have trimmed down the list to the Top 10 or 15. When it is down to the final

FAP SETS/ A2-6

GMA 7 fights back

By Nini Valera

GMA 7 HAS FILED A MOTION FOR RECONsideration of the decision of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to suspend the documentary program "I-Witness" for two consecutive weeks, for showing "exaggerated large male phalluses" and "acts of masturbation" in the episode "Lukayo: Hindi Ito Bastos," aired on May 22.

The motion was filed on Monday by GMA 7 legal counsel Dick B. Perez.

The network argued that the suspension did not take into consideration one of the MTRCB's own implementing rules and regulations—that the classification "shall be based on the treatment of theme, violence, language, nudity, sex ... and other similar elements."

GMA 7 insisted: "The [wooden] phallic symbols ... were part of [a] ritual as documented by the program. The primary symbolism is that of fertility and the mockery of male chauvinism."

In the June 22 memo suspending "I-Witness," MTRCB chief Ma. Consoliza Laguardia said that "... any television program that does not conform to the 'G' and 'PG' classification may not be aired ... phalluses and masturbation do not fall within the 'G' and 'PG' classifications."

GMA 7 countered that showing the phalluses did not violate the program's PG classification.

Practiced in Kalayaan, Laguna, the ritual was first documented by National Artist Ra-

GMA 7/ A2-6

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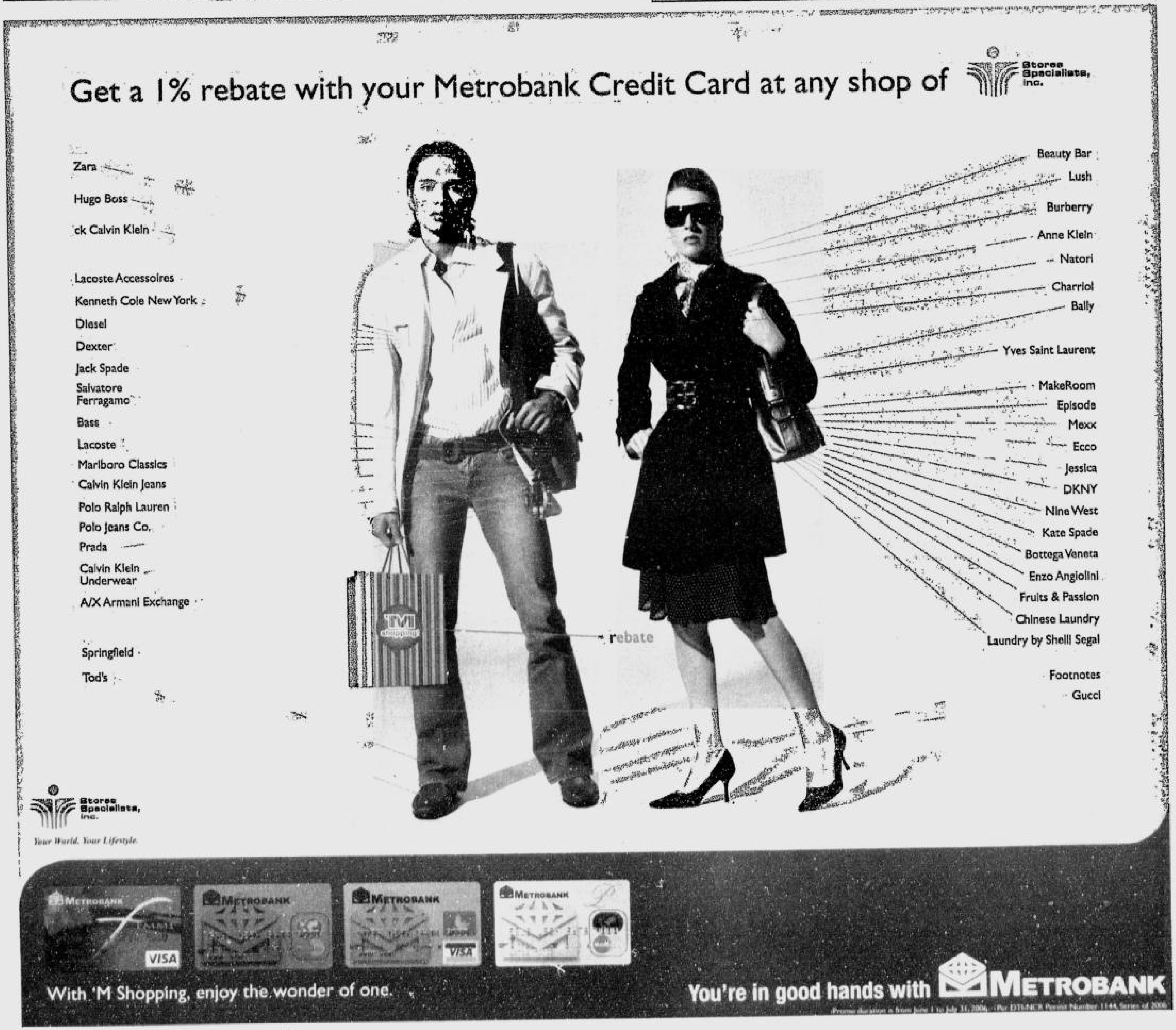

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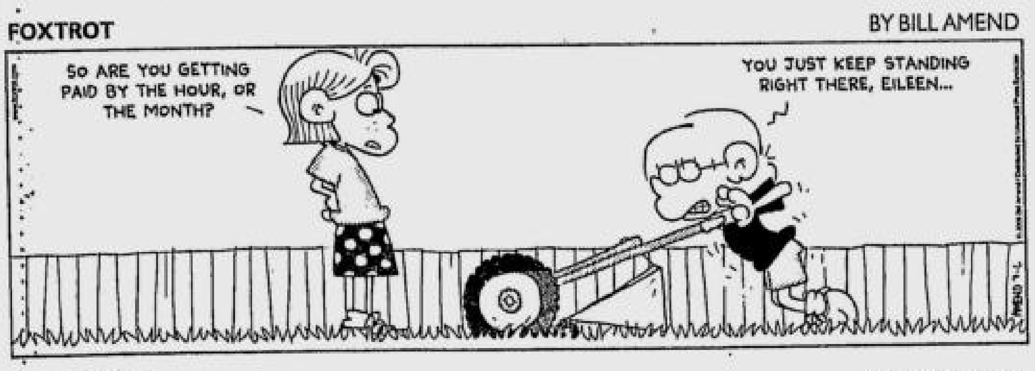
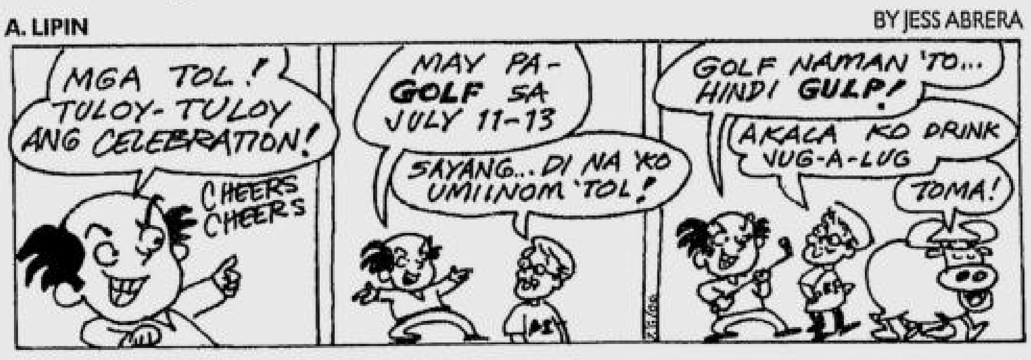
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


SO ARE YOU GETTING PAID BY THE HOUR, OR THE MONTH?
YOU JUST KEEP STANDING RIGHT THERE, EILEEN...

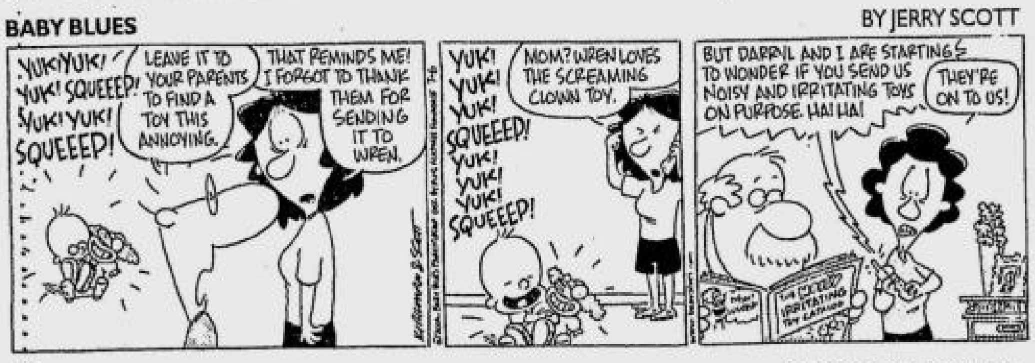
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MGA TOL! TULOY-TULOY ANG CELEBRATION!
CHEERS CHEERS
MAY PA-GOLF SA JULY 11-13
SAYANG... DI NA KO UMIINOM 'TOL!
GOLF NAMAN 'TO... HINDI GULP!
AKALA KO DRINK VUG-A-LUG
TOMA!

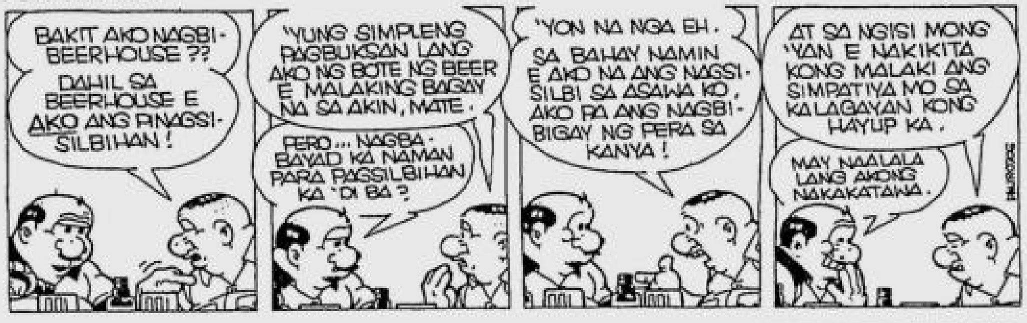
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YUK! YUK! YUK! SQUEEEP! YUK! YUK! SQUEEEP!
LEAVE IT TO YOUR PARENTS TO FIND A TOY THIS ANNOYING.
THAT REMINDS ME! I FORGOT TO THANK THEM FOR SENDING IT TO WREN.
YUK! YUK! YUK! SQUEEEP! YUK! YUK! YUK! SQUEEEP!
MOM? WREN LOVES THE SCREAMING CLOWN TOY.
BUT DARRYL AND I ARE STARTING TO WONDER IF YOU SEND US NOISY AND IRRITATING TOYS ON PURPOSE. HA! HA!
THEY'RE ON TO US!
THE 100 MOST IRRITATING TOY CATALOG

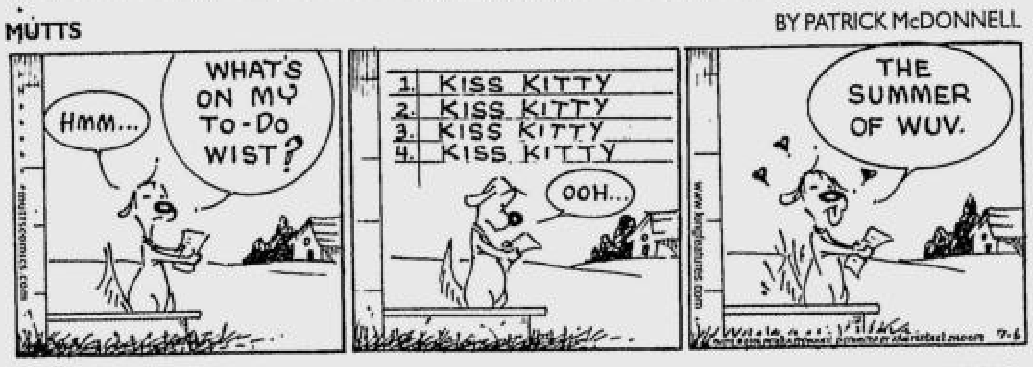
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAKIT AKO NAGBI-BEERHOUSE ??
DAHIL SA BEERHOUSE E AKO ANG PINAGSI-SILBIHAN!
'YUNG SIMPLENG PAGBUKSAN LANG AKO NG BOTE NG BEER E MALAKING BAGAY NA SA AKIN, MATE.
PERO... NAGBA-BAYAD KA NAMAN PARA PAGSILBIHAN KA 'DI BA?
'YON NA NGA EH.
SA BAHAY NAMIN E AKO NA ANG NAGSI-SILBI SA ASAWA KO, AKO PA ANG NAGBI-BIGAY NG PERA SA KANYA!
AT SA NGISI MONG 'YAN E NAKIKITA KONG MALAKI ANG SIMPATIYA MO SA KALAGAYAN KONG HAYUP KA.
MAY NAALALA LANG AKONG NAKAKATAWA.

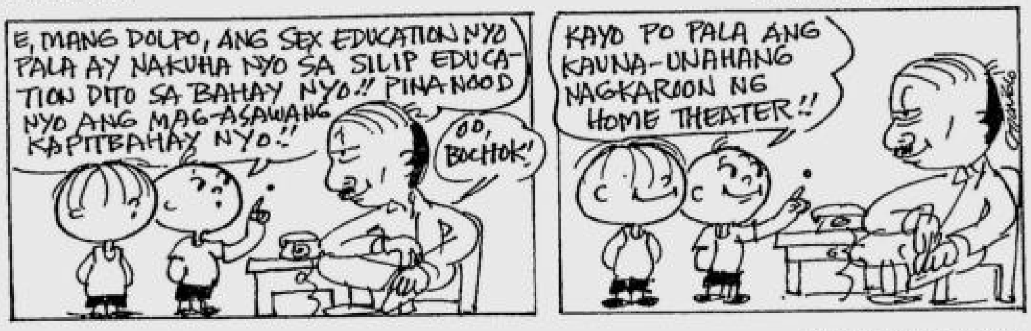
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HMM...
WHAT'S ON MY TO-DO WIST?
1. KISS KITTY
2. KISS KITTY
3. KISS KITTY
4. KISS KITTY
OOH...
THE SUMMER OF WUV.

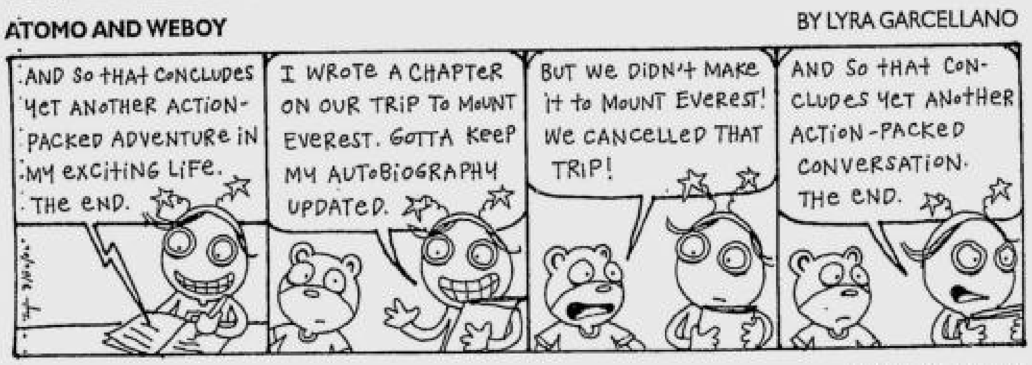
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


E, MANG DOLPO, ANG SEX EDUCATION NYO PALA AY NAKUHA NYO SA SILIP EDUCATION DITO SA BAHAY NYO!! PINANOOD NYO ANG MAG-ASAWANG KAPITBAHAY NYO!!
OO, BOCHOK!
KAYO PO PALA ANG KAUNA-UNAHANG NAGKAROON NG HOME THEATER!!

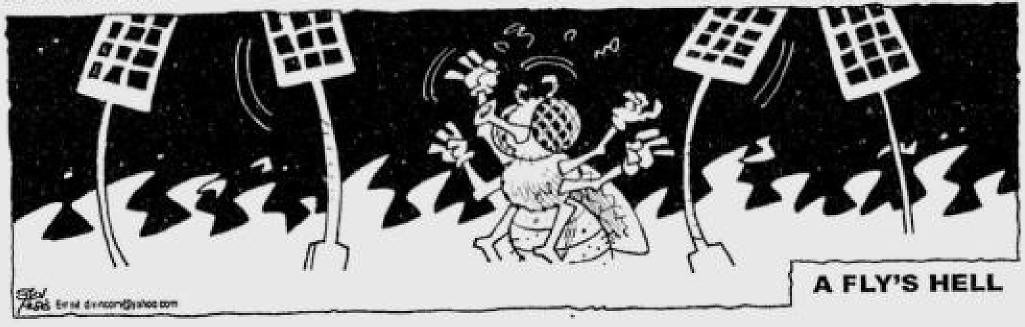
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


AND SO THAT CONCLUDES YET ANOTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE IN MY EXCITING LIFE. THE END.
I WROTE A CHAPTER ON OUR TRIP TO MOUNT EVEREST. GOTTA KEEP MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY UPDATED.
BUT WE DIDN'T MAKE IT TO MOUNT EVEREST! WE CANCELLED THAT TRIP!
AND SO THAT CONCLUDES YET ANOTHER ACTION-PACKED CONVERSATION. THE END.

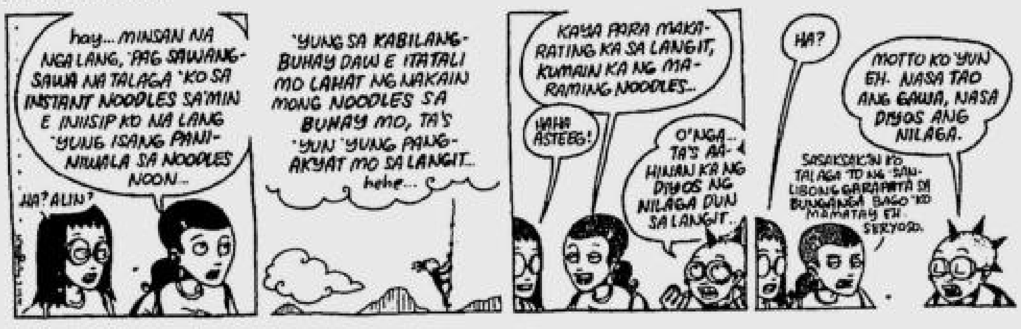
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



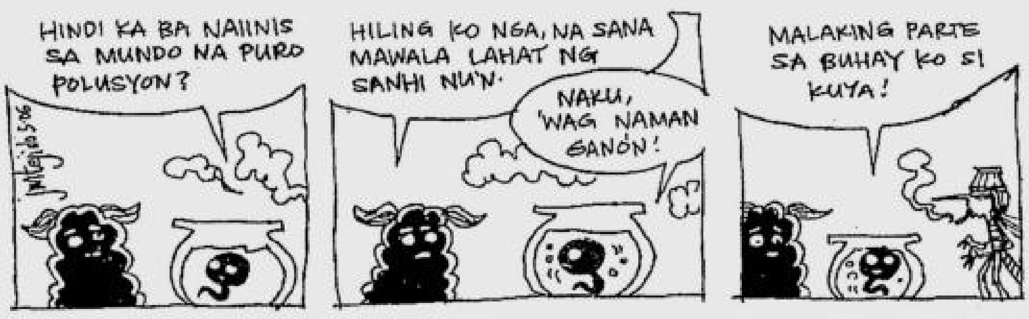
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay... MINSAN NA NGA LANG, 'PAG SAWANG-SAWA NA TALAGA 'KO SA INSTANT NOODLES SA'MIN E INIISIP KO NA LANG 'YUNG ISANG PANI-NIWALA SA NOODLES NOON...
HA? ALIN?
'YUNG SA KABILANG-BUHAY DAW E ITATALI MO LAHAT NG NAKAIN MONG NOODLES SA BUHAY MO, TA'S 'YUN 'YUNG PANG-AKYAT MO SA LANGIT... hehe...
KAYA PARA MAKA-RATING KA SA LANGIT, KUMAIN KA NG MA-RAMING NOODLES...
HAHA ASTEEG!
O'NGA... TA'S AA-HINAN KA NG DIYOS NG NILAGA DUN SA LANGIT...
HA?
MOTTO KO 'YUN EH. NASA TAO ANG GAWA, NASA DIYOS ANG NILAGA.
SASAKSAKIN KO TALAGA 'TO NG SAN-LIBONG GARAPATA SA BUNGANGA BAGO KO MAMATAY EH SERYOSO.

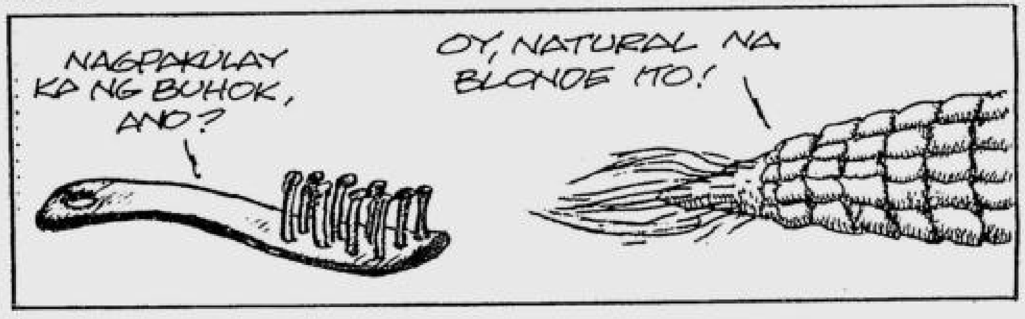
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HINDI KA BA NAIINIS SA MUNDO NA PURO POLUSYON?
HILING KO NGA, NA SANA MAWALA LAHAT NG SANHI NU'N.
NAKU, 'WAG NAMAN GANÓN!
MALAKING PARTE SA BUHAY KO SI KUYA!

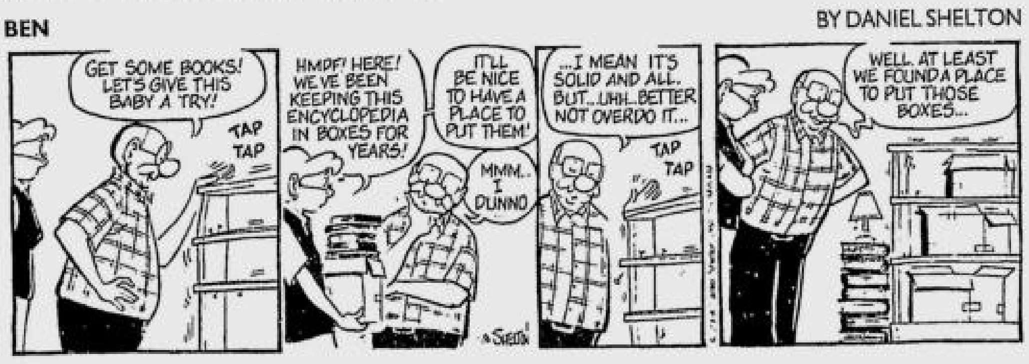
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NAGPAKULAY KA NG BUHOK, ANO?
OY, NATURAL NA BLONDE MO!

BEN

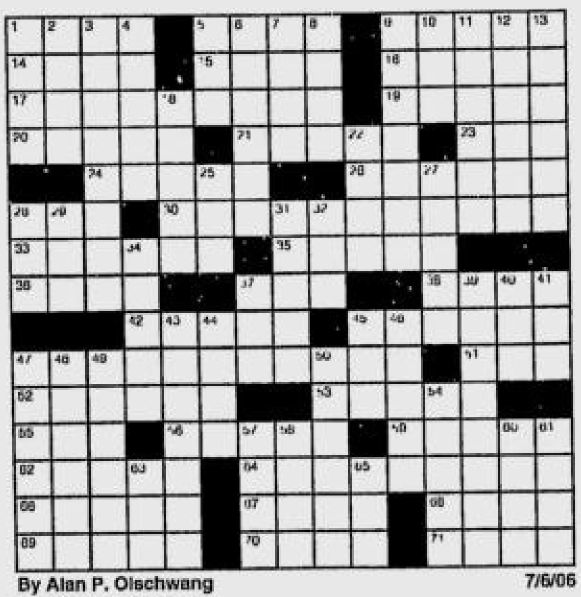
BY DANIEL SHELTON


GET SOME BOOKS! LET'S GIVE THIS BABY A TRY!
TAP TAP
HMPF! HERE! WE'VE BEEN KEEPING THIS ENCYCLOPEDIA IN BOXES FOR YEARS!
IT'LL BE NICE TO HAVE A PLACE TO PUT THEM!
MMM... I DUNNO
...I MEAN IT'S SOLID AND ALL. BUT...UHH...BETTER NOT OVERDO IT...
TAP TAP
WELL, AT LEAST WE FOUND A PLACE TO PUT THOSE BOXES...

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 WWW addresses
5 Frenzied
9 Portents
14 Act like an usher
15 Yawn
16 Composition for nine
17 Start of Katharine Hepburn quote
19 Fall bloomer
20 Bikini, for one
21 Ford's folly
23 Oklahoma town
24 Corruptible
26 In truth
28 Immediate point in tennis
30 Part 2 of quote
33 Pocketbooks
35 Male red deer
36 Formerly, formerly
37 Decade count
38 Close
42 Wickerwork willow
45 Kisses and cuddles
47 Part 3 of quote
51 Talk informally
52 Overturns
53 "More Than I Can Say" singer
55 French co.
56 Timex rival
59 Weather conditions
62 Gung-ho
64 End of quote
66 Mr. T's outfit
67 Youngsters
68 Unless, in law
69 Eastman and Thomas
70 Bigfoot's shoe size
71 Passed with flying colors

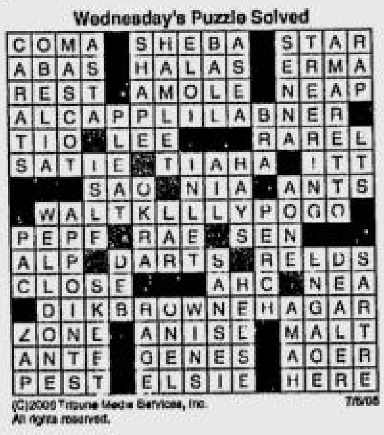
DOWN
1 Voice of America org.
2 Deprived
3 Times between flights
4 Ripped off
5 In days past
6 Phone company, once
7 Columnists' pg.
8 Florida islands
9 Standing by
10 Cal. pages
11 Necessitate
12 Tailor's tool
13 Wanders off
18 Arm bones
22 Eternal
25 Capp and Capone
27 Actress Rene
28 Orangutan or gibbon
29 Mongrel
31 Heat unit
32 Solo in "Star Wars"
34 "Dred" author
37 __ Aviv-Jaffa
39 Terrifying
40 Spanish article
41 Recipe amt.
43 TV comedies
44 Ingrid in "Casablanca"
45 987-65-4321 group
46 __ out (intimidate)
47 Desert blooms
48 Narcotic
49 Online newsgroup
50 Tristan's love
54 Actress Verdugo
57 Rice wine
58 Nastase of tennis
60 Erato or Clio
61 Oklahoma city
63 Lah-di-__
65 Half a fly?



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

7/6/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



C	O	M	A	■	S	H	E	B	A	■	S	T	A	R
A	B	A	S	■	H	A	L	A	S	■	E	R	M	A
R	E	S	T	■	A	M	O	L	E	■	N	E	A	P
A	L	C	A	P	P	L	I	L	A	B	N	E	R	■
T	I	O	■	L	E	E	■	■	■	R	A	R	E	L
S	A	T	I	E	■	T	I	A	H	A	■	I	T	T
■	■	■	S	A	O	■	N	I	A	■	A	N	T	S
■	W	A	L	T	K	L	L	L	Y	P	O	G	O	■
P	E	P	F	■	R	A	E	■	S	E	N	■	■	■
A	L	P	■	D	A	R	T	S	■	R	E	L	D	S
C	L	O	S	E	■	■	■	A	H	C	■	N	E	A
■	D	I	K	B	R	O	W	N	E	H	A	G	A	R
Z	O	N	E	■	A	N	I	S	E	■	M	A	L	T
A	N	T	E	■	G	E	N	E	S	■	A	O	E	R
P	E	S	T	■	E	L	S	I	E	■	H	E	R	E

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7/5/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a strong charisma: People find you attractive. This might be because you live your life with fervent enthusiasm for whatever interests you (and you're interested in many things). Often, it seems as if fate has a hand in your affairs and your destiny. You're very skiful at weighing the pros and cons of anything. An important choice awaits you this year. (Choose wisely.)
Birthdate of: Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibet; President George W. Bush; Merv Griffin, entertainer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Exciting, surprising events could take place at home or within your family today. You might introduce computers or new kinds of technology (perhaps a home entertainment system? Yay!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Don't sit around today and relax. Get out and do something different. You're in the mood to explore new horizons. Break with routine. Be open to entirely new experiences.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Unexpected and new ways of earning money might occur to you now. Similarly, you might also have unexpected, exciting opportunities to spend it. It goes by so quickly!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You're bold and frank with others today. You're ready to tell it like it is. That's because you feel a bit rebellious. You intend to say what you mean and mean what you say.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might surprise yourself by discovering certain truths about yourself that you were not conscious of before. This is good. It's growth.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Exciting, unusual people might enter your life today. These could be brief encounters or the beginning of a new and very memorable friendship.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Take advantage of unexpected opportunities that come your way today. Bosses and VIPs might surprise you. Be ready for something unexpected. It will be a pleasant, learning experience.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Surprise chances to travel or increase your education or training in some way are likely today. Explore whatever comes your way. Exciting new experiences will make you feel more alive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Unexpected goodies might fall in your lap today. Surprise inheritances, gifts and favors from others come your way. Your partner might also get a raise or a bonus.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): A close friend or partner might do or say something today that really catches you off guard. Nevertheless, you find it a bit thrilling—even challenging!

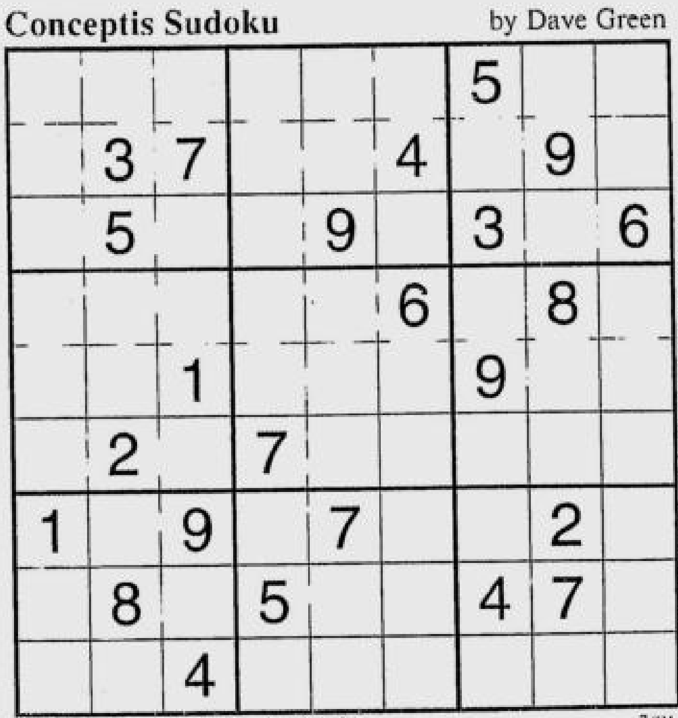
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Job opportunities are at hand today. Others will experience surprises at work or encounters with unexpected situations with coworkers. It's an unpredictable day!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Love at first sight might drop in your lap (eyes across a crowded room). Something connected with romance, children, the entertainment world or the hospitality industry is new, fresh and exciting!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green



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		1				9		
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	8		5			4	7	
		4						

Difficulty Level ★★★

7/06

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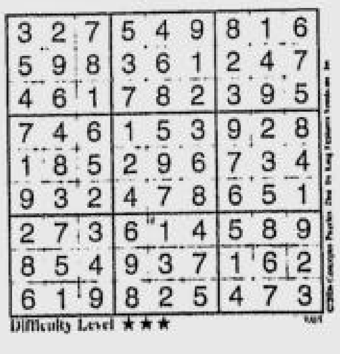
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle



3	2	7	5	4	9	8	1	6
5	9	8	3	6	1	2	4	7
4	6	1	7	8	2	3	9	5
7	4	6	1	5	3	9	2	8
1	8	5	2	9	6	7	3	4
9	3	2	4	7	8	6	5	1
2	7	3	6	1	4	5	8	9
8	5	4	9	3	7	1	6	2
6	1	9	8	2	5	4	7	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

Digital films top Urian nominees

INDEPENDENT DIGITAL FILMMAKERS DOMInated the list of nominees to the 29th Gawad Urian, handed out by the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, pioneering society of film critics.

Competing for Best Picture are "Ala Verde Ala Pobre" (Muchachos Bravos Filmworks), "Big Time" (Arkeofilms), "Blue Moon" (Regal Films), "Ang Daan Patungong Kalimugtong" (Sampaybakod Productions), "La Visa Loca" (Unitel Films), and "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros" (ufo Films).

Save for "Blue Moon," these nominees are made on digital film—transferred to celluloid for commercial release. Their summaries and other nominations:

- "Ala Verde Ala Pobre," about a slum couple living along Manila's railroad tracks. Also nominated for Editing, Production Design. The film marks the return of avant-garde artist Briccio Santos, nominated for Best Director; Ana Capri, for Best Actress.
- "Big Time," about small-time criminals. Also nominated for Sound, Editing, Production Design, Screenplay, Direction; Michael de Mesa, for Best Supporting Actor; Jamie Wilson, for Best Actor.
- "Blue Moon," a nostalgic romance across generations. Also nominated for Sound, Music, Editing, Cinematography; Joel Lamangan, for Best Director; Boots Anson Roa and Jennylyn Mercado, for Best Supporting Actress; Dennis Trillo, for Best Actor.
- "Kalimugtong," poignant story of two Benguet orphans who traverse mountains and rivers to get to school everyday. Nominated for all categories, except Best Supporting Actor—Mes de Guzman for Director, Screenplay; Analyn Bangsi-il, for Best Actress; Rhenuel Ordono, for Best Actor; Hallen Sumingwa, for Best Supporting Actress.
- "La Visa Loca," a satire on the American dream. Also nominated for Music, Production Design, Screenplay; Johnny Delgado, for Best Supporting Actor; Robin Padilla, for Best Actor.
- "Maximo Oliveros," arguably the most successful digital feature last year. Also nominated for Music, Editing, Cinematography, Production Design, Screenplay, Direction; Solinian Cruz, Ping Medina, for Best Supporting Actor; Nathan Lopez, for Best Actor.

The awards ceremonies, set on Aug. 3, will be broadcast on Channel 9.

The Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino is chaired by Mike Rapatan of the Department of Communication of De la Salle University. The members are National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera, former Movie and Television Review and Classification Board chair Nicanor Tiongson, broadcast personality Butch Francisco, Malaya editor and MTRCB member Mario Hernando, UP College of Mass Communication professor Gigi Alfonso, National University of Singapore lecturer Rolando Tolentino, and INQUIRER arts and culture editor and UST professor Lito Zulueta.

The other nominees:

- Best Screenplay: Mario Cornejo, Monster Jimenez, "Big Time"; Lee Meily, "La Visa Loca"; Michiko Yamamoto, "Maximo"; Shugo Praico, "Sa Aking Pagkagising Mula sa Kamulatan."
- Best Actor: Carlo Aquino, "Kamulatan"; Ricky Davao, "Pusang Gala"; Yul Servo, "Ilusyon."
- Best Actress: Irma Adlawan, "Sa North Diversion Road"; Claudine Barreto, "Nasaan Ka Man"; Ana Capri, "Ala Verde"; Jaclyn Jose, "Sarungbanggi"; Jaycee Parker, "Ilusyon"; Analyn Bangsi-il ("Kalimugtong").
- Best Supporting Actor: Ketchup Eusebio, "Kamulatan."
- Best Supporting Actress: Joy Soler-de Castro, "Pepot Artista"; Gloria Diaz, Hilda Koronel, "Nasaan Ka Man."
- Best Production Design: Clint Catalan, Cristina Dy, Lily Esquillon, "Maximo"; Christina Dy, "Big Time"; Benjamin Padero, "Masahista"; Norman Regalado, "La Visa Loca"; Mes de Guzman, Noel Montano, "Kalimugtong"; Briccio Santos, Anil Rao, "Ala Verde."
- Best Cinematography: Albert Banzon, "Kalimugtong"; Odyssey Flores, "Ilusyon"; Nap Jamir, "Maximo"; Timmy Jimenez, Monchie Redoble, "Masahista"; Charlie Peralta, "Nasaan Ka Man"; Rolly Manuel, "Blue Moon"; Wowie Hao, Odyssey Flores, "Dilim."
- Best Editing: Mario Cornejo, Monster Jimenez, "Big Time"; Ellen Ramos, Paulo Villaluna, "Ilusyon"; Clarence Sison, "Maximo"; Marya Ignacio, "Blue Moon"; Abbas Tabas, Arasaw Kurabokov, "Kalimugtong"; Anil Rao, "Ala Verde"; Hector Macaso, Sunshine Matutina, "Dilim."
- Best Music: Vincent de Jesus, "La Visa Loca"; Pepe Smith, "Maximo"; GMA Records, "Mulawin, the Movie"; Von de Guzman, "Blue Moon"; Bernard "Nio" Manzano, "Kalimugtong."
- Best Sound: Raffy Magsaysay, "Big Time"; Addis Tabong, "Nasaan Ka Man"; Michael Idioma, "Blue Moon"; Bob Macabenta, "Kalimugtong"; Tris Suguitan, "Dilim."

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3 SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:50, 4:20, 7:45, 11:10 G
4 LAKE HOUSE 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 G

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4 LAKE HOUSE MTRCB GP 12 40, 3.00, 5 20, 7 40, 10 00
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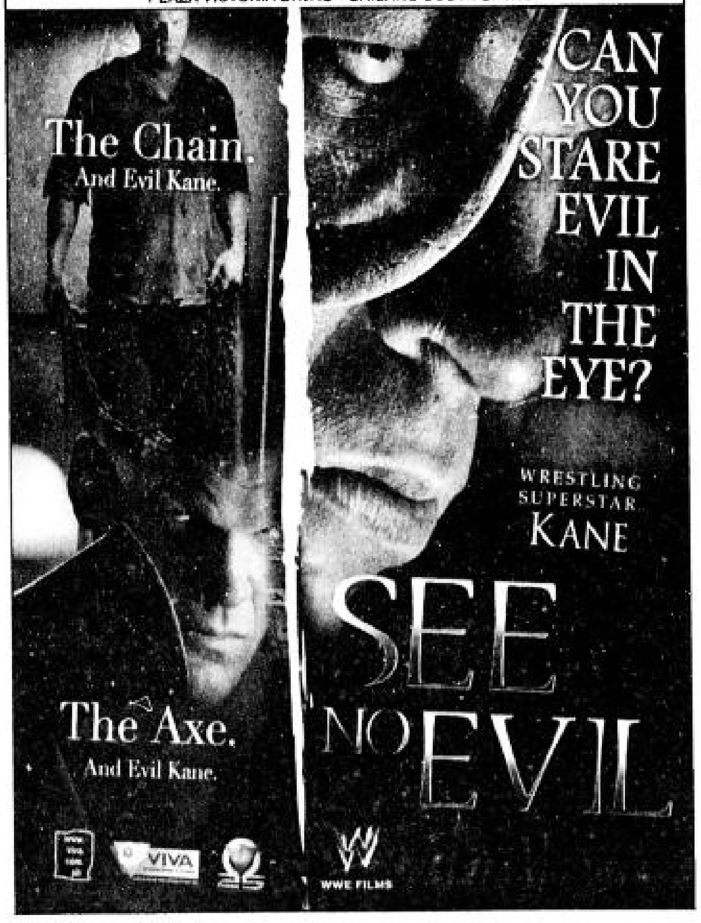
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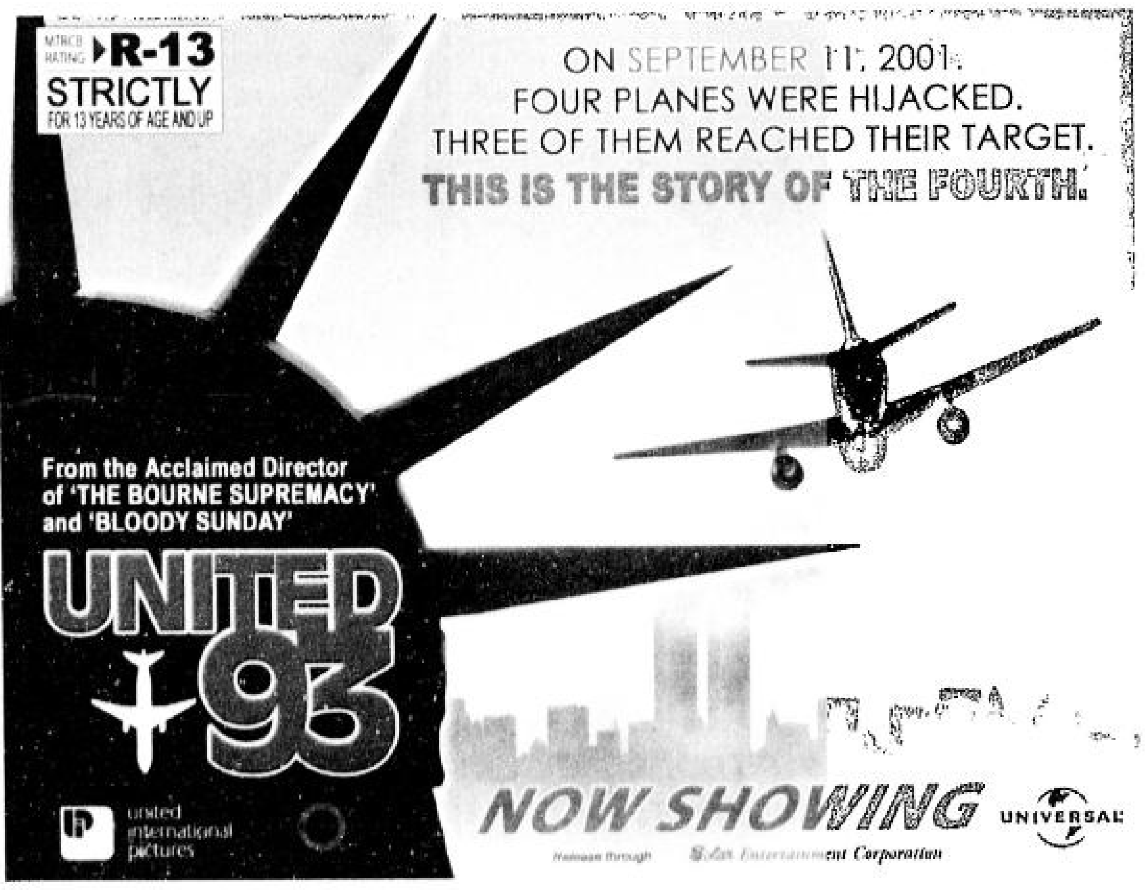
"I URGE YOU TO SEE UNITED 93" MARY RIDDELL, THE OBSERVER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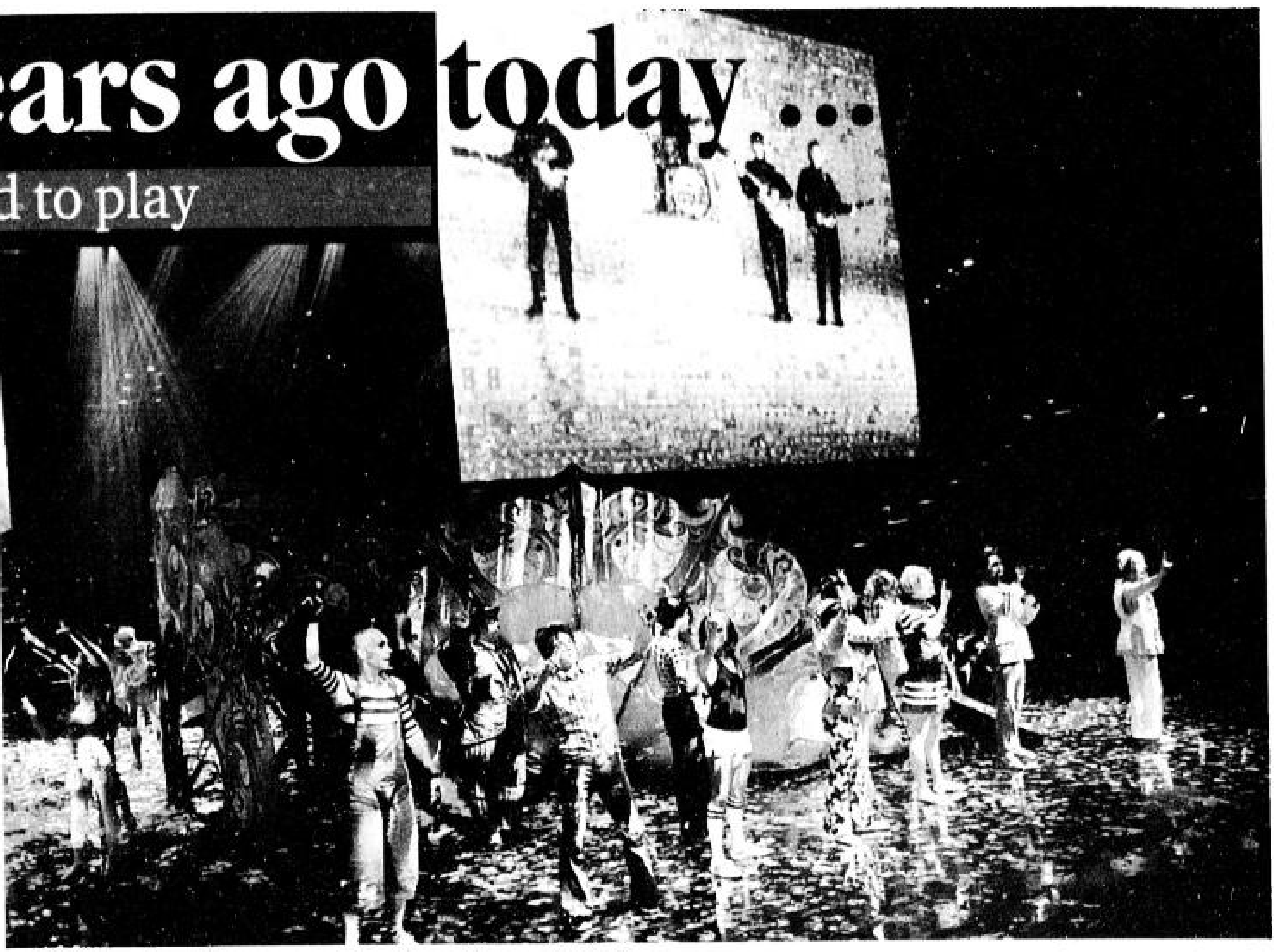
It was 40 years ago today ...

... the Beatles came around to play



By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—THE BEATles played two concerts at the Rizal Memorial Football Stadium 40 years ago on July 4.

The first one at 4 p.m. drew 30,000 spectators, the evening concert 50,000—second biggest concert attendance for the greatest band in history, next to their Shea Concert in New York in August 1965.

But this is not why July 4, 1966 is very memorable not only to the Beatles and their fans but to the whole country.

The date is significant for what did not happen. Eric Gamalinda opened his novel, "The Empire of Memory," with it, in a chapter titled "Hard Day's Night in Manila."

The late sports editor Roberto Cuevas headlined the incident, "Furor over Beatles snub mars show."

Anthology

The Manila Chronicle article is included in the definitive "Beatles Anthology" which discusses the "Incident in Manila."

It is said that the Beatles snubbed an appointment with then First Lady Imelda Marcos (with about 300 children of politicians and military officers, including the Marcos children) in Malacañang.

Joseph William "Pepe" Smith was a member at the time of D'Downbeats, one of the front acts for the Beatles concerts. He said the Beatles had nothing to do with the snub.

"They were unaware of the appointment. It was not in their schedule," Smith recently told the INQUIRER. "Or maybe they were informed two hours before."

Rude awakenings

He recalled: "I woke up the morning after the concert [with] the whole neighborhood glued to Channel 3 showing the presidential table all set up... no Beatles."

In the anthology, Ringo Starr says that, when they woke up, service at the Manila Hotel had gone cold. Their requests for breakfast and newspapers had gone unheeded.

Starr continues: "We turned the TV on and there was a horrific show of Madame Marcos screaming, 'They've let me down.' There were all these shots of empty plates and ... faces of little kids crying because the Beatles hadn't turned up."

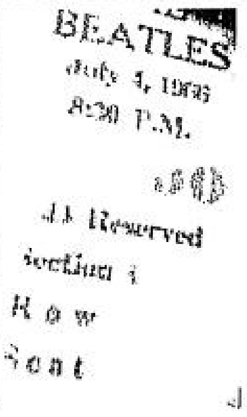
Adds George Harrison, also in the anthology: "We couldn't believe it [as] we watched ourselves not arriving at the presidential palace."

As a result of the snub, only one motorcycle escort accompanied the departing Beatles to the Manila International Airport—whereas on their arrival motorcade, Starr says, there had been "thousands of kids ... hundreds upon hundreds of policemen."

Smith, who had gone with some band mates to see the Beatles off, said things became uglier at the airport. "A [gun] was pointed at them. An attaché case said to contain their money was confiscated. They were made to walk to their plane."

Harrison recounts in the anthology: "[They came] up to us, pushing and screaming. I was trying to ... stay out of their way. I saw a couple of Buddhist monks and hid behind them."

Starr adds: "They started spitting at us ... There's the famous story of John and me hiding behind these nuns because we thought, 'It's a Catholic country, they won't beat up the nuns.'"



BEATLES
July 4, 1966
8:30 P.M.
Reserved
Section
Row
Seat

CIRQUE du Soleil's "Love" show at Las Vegas' Mirage Hotel, above. Far left, Pepe Smith recalls brief encounter with The Beatles; and at left, an admission ticket to the Rizal Memorial Stadium concert in 1966.
EV ESPIRITU/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Paul McCartney remembers that: "When the fisticuffs broke out, we [ran] to the nuns. It was a nice little shot, nuns and Beatles in a corner. They didn't actually protect us; they just stood there looking a bit bemused."

McCartney must have seen the connection of the nuns and People Power revolt 20 years later. In the anthology, he says:

"It was an unfortunate little trip, but when we found out what Marcos and Imelda had been doing to the people ... we were glad to have done what we did."

Smith found it unfortunate that the "snub" had been given too much prominence. "After a few weeks, the whole thing was forgotten anyway," he said.

Around the world

Around the world, The Beatles are currently being remembered in different ways, 40 years after their first rush of hit records.

In Las Vegas, they are brought back to life in a Cirque du Soleil spectacular that marks the band's first agreement to collaborate on a stage show.

The Canadian acrobatic troupe last weekend opened its "Love" celebration of The Beatles' musical legacy in a custom-built, 2,000-seat theater at the Mirage hotel.

In Japan, the Beatles visited only once, but the country is commemorating the 40th anniversary of their concerts there as if the Fab Four had never left the stage.

Japanese media are lost in Beatlemania, and the Capitol Tokyu Hotel, where they last stayed in 1966 —when it was still the Tokyo Hilton—is offering a special last viewing of their suite before the hotel's demolition.

With a report from Reuters

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DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

ZSAZSA PADILLA is more than thrilled to be playing the title role in Regal Films' "Zsazsa Zaturnnah The Movie." "My kids had long told me that the comic book superhero looked like me, so I got curious. True enough, I found, *kahawig ko nga*! I was flattered when I heard that, in fact, she had been named after me. So I'm giving my all to this project. I've begun training for the fight scenes and dieting so I can fit into that revealing costume."

Does **Dolphy** have any objections to her sexy outfit? Chuckling, she said, "I guess he's used to seeing my billboard on Edsa so he doesn't seem to mind anymore." Superman is in again. Now make way for Zsazsa, SuperwoMom.

Happy bunch

Seiko Film's "I Wanna Be Happy" is a compact family comedy with situations and predicaments that everyone can relate to. Off-cam, the cast were quite a happy bunch, too, and jelled really well.

For instance, **Keanna Reeves** says she didn't fall for **Joey Marquez**'s charms because she can easily beat him in his own game. "*Pareho ang talangka namin. Nagkakaintindihan kami, kaya di kami talo*!

Joey himself admits that the movie's title has been his exit line from relationships many times over. Famous last words, huh, *Pareng* Joey?

And what's this I heard that during the shooting, **Michelle Madrigal** was sending feelers to **Christian Vasquez**? Did he feel it or was she the only one who fell?

Ex files

Nancy Castiglione was spotted with the ex-hubby of socialite **Happy Ongpauco, Wowie Rivera**, at the party of Bench. Not too long ago, Happy figured in a bar brawl with Wowie's ex, **Aiko Melendez**, which even ended up in court. Now Happy is dating **Dexter Chu Mei** (owner of Discovery Suites). Merry *marry* go round? Who's gonna love happily ever after?

Mutual admiration

While doing Heaven's Best Entertainment's initial offering, "Umuulan, Umaaraw," **Herbert Bautista** was smitten with **Lara Quigaman**. "She's even prettier in person," gushed Bistek. Lara is all praise, too, for the vice mayor. "He's like a *kuya*. He's fond of asking *pang*-beauty pageant *na* questions, which makes me laugh *talaga*!" Herbert said he envied **Ryan Agoncillo**, who has a bed scene with Lara. Even if Vice is the producer, he's not one to take advantage and make the scenes suit his whims.

Lovespeak

The romantic fool in me enjoyed listening to **Ryan Agoncillo**'s double-disc compilation of OPM love songs, "Lovespeak" (released by Vicor).

Ryan shares his thoughts on love and life in this rare CD containing the best loved songs of **Sharon Cuneta, Gary V, Martin Nievera, Basil Valdez** and many more. Highlight of the CD is the song of Ryan's ladylove (**Judy Ann Santos**) for him, "No Ordinary Love." Truly a collector's item for all those who live love and love life like Ryan does.

Guess list

- Guess who this newscaster is?

His make-up artist could no longer stand how dirty and foul smelling his make-up kit is, so she volunteered to clean the sponges, brushes and everything else in it. She sighs, "*Sayang ang guwapo pa naman niya* but *di siya malinis sa gamit* so that means *di rin siya malinis sa katawan*!"

Bad news for the newscaster.

- Guess who this stand-up comic is? She kept bragging to her colleagues that she had bought a very expensive face powder compact. As she was powdering her nose, the case fell. It turned out that she was using a local product which she had placed in the case of a pricey brand. Powder Puff Girl goes pffft!

Final say

Catch "The Final Say, Cha-Cha," which airs Wednesdays on NBN 4, 8-9 p.m. Hear both sides of the issue on the show hosted by Atty. **Romela Bengzon** with **Doris Bigornia** reporting from the field.

Black Eyed Peas

Superstar Apl.de.ap (**Allan Pineda** in real life) of the Black Eyed Peas may have spent more time overseas than in his native Philippines, but he has not forgotten his roots.

This is quite evident in the trips he and the Peas have made to the Philippines. On a promo tour for their last album in 2004, they quickly fell in love with the electric, eclectic atmosphere of the country and promised to return as soon as they could.

Now the Peas are set to perform at the Araneta Coliseum on July 27. The show, which is part of the Peas' "Monkey Business" tour, is a production of Viva Concerts & Events.

They are expected to set the Big Dome pumping via toe-tapping renditions of their hits, including "Where Is The Love?," "Let's Get It Started," "Shut Up," "Don't Phunk With My Heart," "Don't Lie," and the dancefloor favorite, "My Humps."

The tour is a promo junket for their latest album "Monkey Business," which carries a tribute to Apl's homeland-titled "Bebot" (Filipino slang for "chick"), celebrating various aspects of the Pinoy lifestyle.

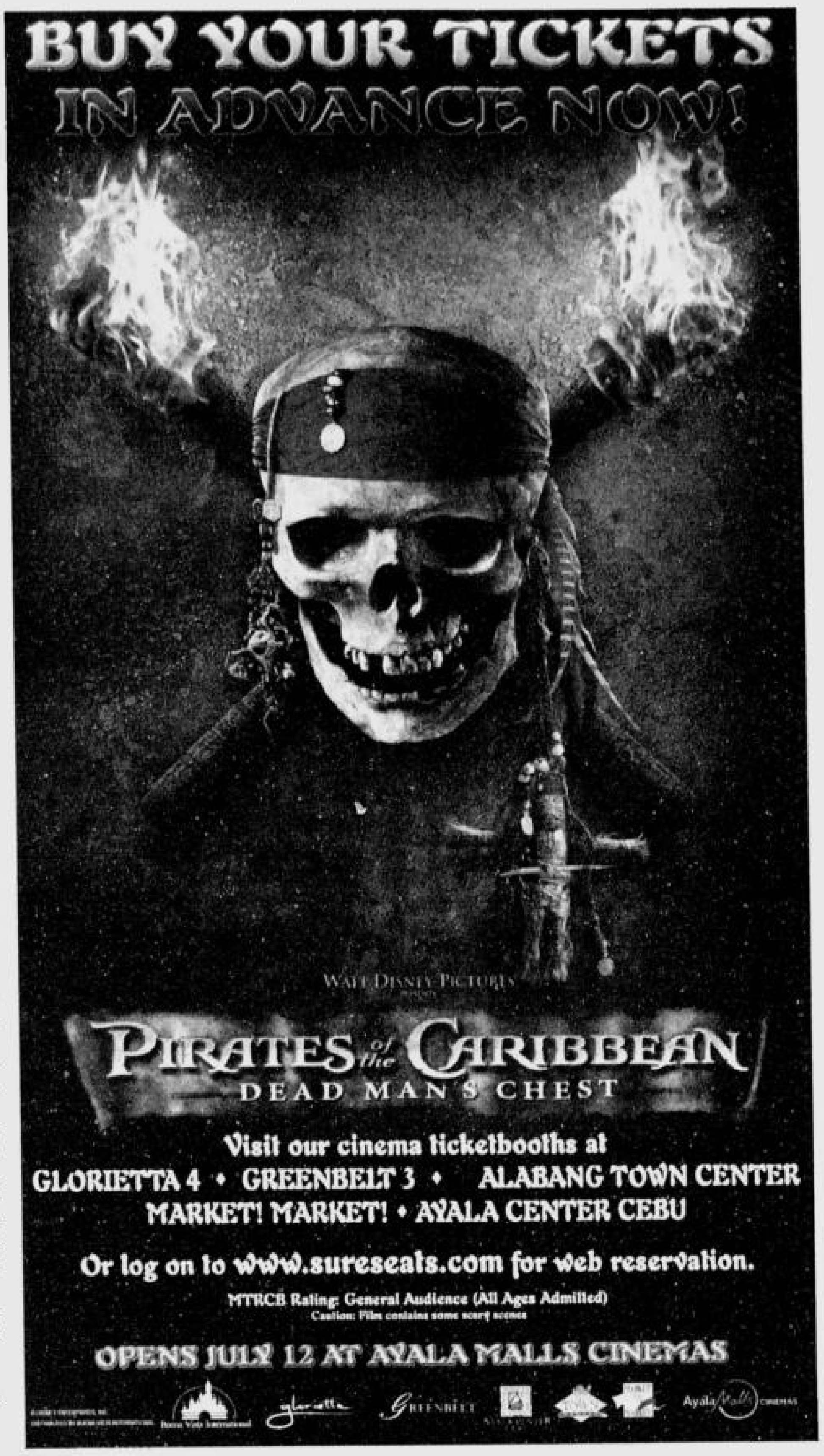
"I experience that lifestyle, and when I go back home," Apl said in a recent interview.

What typically Pinoy things does he enjoy, exactly? "I like buying *balut* from street vendors," he said.

Well, Apl will have a lot of opportunities to introduce his band mates—will.i.am (**William Adams**), Taboo (**Jaime Gomez**), Fergie (**Stacy Ferguson**)—to *balut* and other things Pinoy, as they will be making quite a few more trips to the Philippines in the near future.

Tickets for the July 27 show are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets and at the Araneta Coliseum Box Office.

(*E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com*)



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MTRCB Rating: General Audience (All Ages Admitted)
Caution: Film contains some scary scenes

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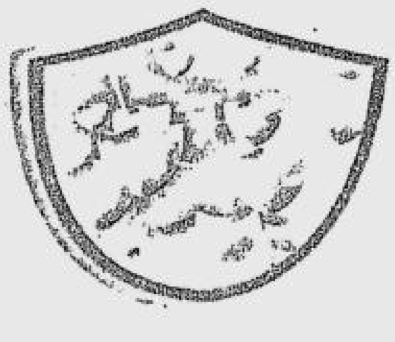

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2 SPL
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 SEE NO EVIL
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
6 LOVE WRECKED
7 UNITED 93

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8 THE NUN

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4 SPL

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3 SEE NO EVIL
4 AMERICAN HAUNTING
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
6 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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2 CHAOS
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What is Superman's birth name?
What gives Superman his powers?
What can take away Superman's powers?
What material blocks Superman's x-ray vision?
What is the name of Superman's secret identity?
Where does Clark Kent work?
Who is Superman's love interest?

Clark Kent
Daily Planet
The Sun
Kryptonite
Green Kryptonite
Lead
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Lois Lane

How to join? E-mail you answers together with your name, address, age and contact number to movieaddicts_smcinema@yahoo.com or send this page together with your particulars at your nearest SM Cinema branch. All answers must be correct in order to qualify. Multiple entries received will only be counted as a single entry. Deadline for submission of entries is on July 12, 2006.

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
CINEMA 2
LOVEWRECKED

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UNITED 93
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
THE NUN
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS

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SUPERMAN RETURNS
SCARY MOVIE 4
THE NUN

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SCARY MOVIE 4
LOVEWRECKED
SUPERMAN RETURNS
UNITED 93
FAST AND FURIOUS 3
LAKE HOUSE
THE NUN
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
SUPERMAN RETURNS
PACQUIAO THE MOVIE
XMEN III

SM CITY SOUTHMALL
SUPERMAN RETURNS
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
UNITED 93
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THE NUN
SCARY MOVIE 4
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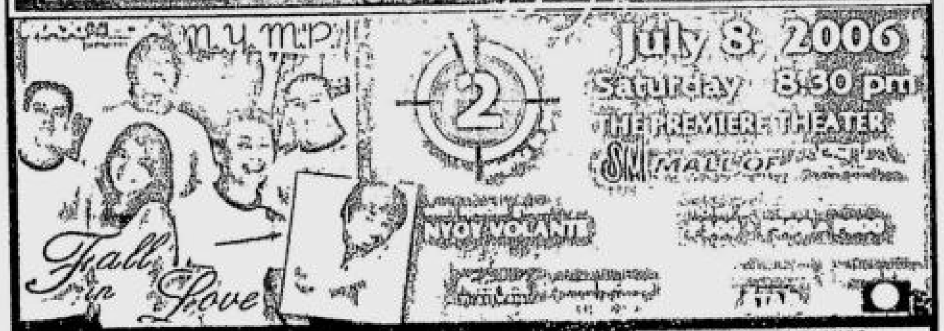

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LOVEWRECKED
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SUPERMAN RETURNS
KAPAG TUMIBOK ANG PUSO
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SM CITY BATANGAS
SUBMERGED
SUPERMAN RETURNS
GARFIELD 2
THE OMEN

SM CITY LUCENA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
GARFIELD 2
SUBMERGED
SCARY MOVIE 4

SM CITY CLARK
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
INSIDE MAN
FAILURE TO LAUNCH
SUPERMAN RETURNS
TAKE THE LEAD

SM CITY PAMPANGA
SUPERMAN RETURNS
SUPERMAN RETURNS
AMERICAN HAUNTING
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LAKE HOUSE
SUPERMAN RETURN
RESERVED
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SM CITY DAVAO
SUPERMAN RETURN
AMERICAN HAUNTING
FAILURE TO LAUNCH
GRANDMA'S BOY
SUPERMAN RETURN
FAST AND FURIOUS

SM CITY CAGAYAN
SUPERMAN RETURN
GARFIELD 2
SCARY MOVIE 4
SUPERMAN RETURN

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GMA 7 fights back

From page A2-1

mon Obusan.

GMA 7 did not air "I-Witness" on Monday. "But this does not mean we are not doing anything about the suspension," Nessa S. Valdellon, GMA public affairs vice president said on Tuesday. "We are fighting it all the way."

Valdellon also clarified that she was not the GMA executive who, Laguardia earlier said, "admitted" during an adjudication meeting on June 6 that she was "initially offended by what she saw."

Valdellon said it was "I-Witness" executive producer Ella Evangelista—who admitted that Laguardia was indeed referring to her.

She explained that during the June 6 meeting, MTRCB lawyer Sonny Cases asked if "Lukayo" hadn't offended her.

Evangelista said she responded, "[I was] in the beginning. But then I got to meet them ... and realized there was nothing offensive with what they were doing."

FAP show will ...

From page A2-1

five, 30 voters from the guilds will watch the movies two weeks before awards night. Three days before the show, the winners will be picked."

Last year's Luna Awards was held in May. This year's show was originally set in August.

According to John Suarez, executive secretary of the FAP Board of Governors, the final five nominees in each category will be announced next month.

Martinez also said the contract of actor Albert Martinez, the awards show producer for the past two years, ended last year.

On June 28, Suarez said, FAP signed a new contract with Eight Elephants, a production firm owned by Romnick Sarmenta, wife Harlene Bautista and some partners.

"The producers may mount a simple show announcing the nominees," the FAP head said. "Following tradition, last year's Best Actress winner, Claudine Barretto, will make the announcements."

Oscar bet

Suarez also reported that the selection process for the country's entry to the Oscar Best Foreign Language Film category was ongoing. He said the selection committee, chaired by National Artist for Film Eddie Romero, was made up of FAP members Pablo Gomez, Robert Arevalo, Johnny Delgado, William Mayo and George Estregan Jr.

Last year, the FAP failed to send an entry to the Oscars. Martinez had vowed to rectify the oversight.

ROUNDUP

Ax Aussie Big Brother

CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA—PRIME MINISTER John Howard called Monday for an Australian reality TV program to be axed after a woman on the show claimed two male contestants sexually assaulted her.

The center-right government has referred Network 10's "Big Brother"— a fly-on-the wall series in which a group of strangers live together and compete for a cash prize—to the television standards watchdog over the incident on Saturday, Communications Minister Helen Coonan's office said.

On a Sunday broadcast, the 22-year-old female contestant was shown tearfully telling her housemates that one of the men held her arms while the other rubbed his crotch in her face, although it did not broadcast footage of the alleged incident. *AP*

Ebert doing well

CHICAGO—FILM CRITIC ROGER EBERT, WHO has battled cancer in recent years, was in serious but stable condition following an emergency operation to repair complications from a previous cancer surgery.

EBERT

Ebert, famous for his "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" critiques, was doing well Sunday night, his family said in a statement.

"The doctors say Roger is stable and responding well to the recent surgery," said his wife, Chaz. "We are grateful for your prayers and support but please give the big guy the space and time needed to recover until he is ready to use those thumbs again." *AP*

'Superman' delivers

LOS ANGELES— ESTIMATED TICKET SALES FOR Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official trackers:

1) "Superman Returns," $52.15M; 2) "The Devil Wears Prada," $27M; 3) "Click," $19.4M; 4) "Cars," $14M; 5) "Nacho Libre," $6.2M; 6) "The Lake House," $4.5M; 7) "The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift," $4.4M; 8) "Waist Deep," $3.3M; 9) "The Break-Up," $2.8M; 10) "The Da Vinci Code," $2.3M. *AP*

Cupid is a magic mailbox

Cool it, leave logic behind for this one

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IF YOU WANT TO ENJOY VIEWING "THE Lake House," leave your anal-retentive sense of logic at the box office.

This will make it easier for you to more readily groove to the movie's plot and thematic conceit about love being so powerful that it can transcend time.

This has been more "logically" dramatized in the past, but "The Lake House" is not really interested in filling all the blanks and answering all of its viewers' mystified questions.

In the final analysis, that isn't what this production is about, so cool it, and leave your logical, questioning mind with the *takilyera.*

Instead of being so ideationally punctilious, open yourself up to the movie's subjectively romantic premise and invitation:

Believe, if only for 90 minutes, that Cupid has transmogrified himself into a magic mailbox, and it is through this portal into the time continuum that two people living two years apart are able to communicate, fall in love with each other—and eventually meet.

How is this possible? The film makes some attempts to answer that question, but its heart isn't really in the effort.

It's more fascinated by the magical power of love to transcend such bothersome limitations as the right chronology of events. If love is a psychic power, it should be able to confound such conundrums, right?

Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock say "amen" as they portray two star-crossed and time-warped lovers who live in the same house on the lake—two years apart.

He's in 2004, she's in 2006—and, therefore, never the twain shall meet? Ah, "never" is yet another word that crumbles as love unleashes its true power, and does its worst—and best.

As soon as they realize that the mailbox in front of the lake house can serve as their sort of time machine through which they can write notes, to each other, the film's fated duo end up liking and loving each other so much that the only issue left to be resolved is : *When will they finally meet?*

This, the film tries to handle with a series of near-misses and unexpected encounters. The clincher is the dramatic dovetailing of an accident that initially appears to involve a stranger, but he eventually turns out to be Reeves' character.

But even this dramatic highlight can't iron out all of the movie's logical warps and woofs (there's a dog involved in the time-traveling leads' story, arf, arf).

—Nor should it be expected to. "The Lake House" is not about seamless storytelling, it's about intimations, nuances, ghosts of a chance, memories of a dance, moments of truth and love blown away like leaves by the wind, often just barely out of reach.

If that's enough for you to go by, you could relate to "The Lake House's" story of love beyond time. If a magic mailbox isn't your idea of what Cupid should be, however, the film could be too slight, evanescent and fey to sustain your interest.

It's the difference between a bird in hand and love on the wing—and empathy could get lost in the flutter.

Richard Merk

Jazz-pop exponent Richard Merk opens the Manhattan Transfer concert at Araneta Coliseum tomorrow. Richard also performs every Wednesday at his popular Merk's Bar Bistro at Greenbelt 3.

Manhattan Transfer hits include "Operator," "Smile Again," "Birdland," "Until I Met You," and "It's Gonna Take a Miracle." Call 911-5555.

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THE LAKE HOUSE 2:10 / 4:40 / 7:10 / 9:40
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SUPERMAN RETURNS 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00
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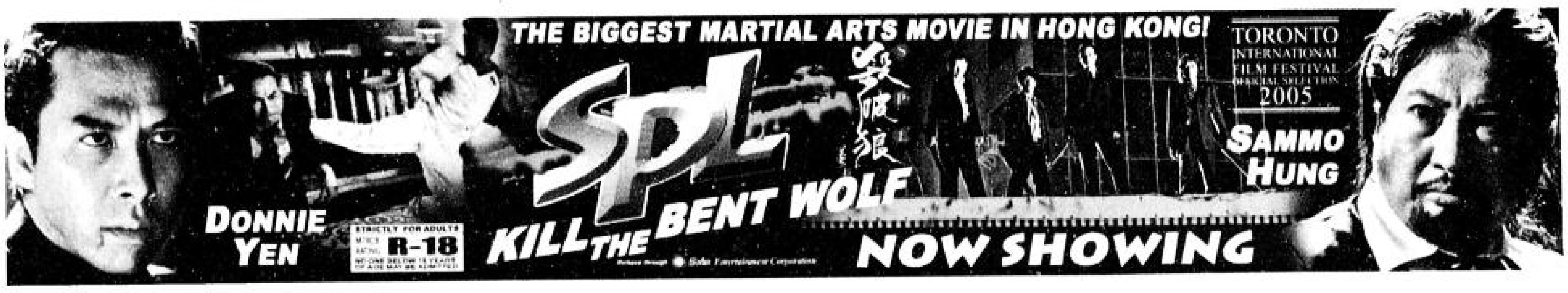
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GB1 GREENBELT 1: 1 UNITED 93; 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
GB3 GREENBELT 3: 1 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS 1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:40 GUARANTEED SEATS; 2 THX SUPERMAN RETURNS 3:10, 6:20, 9:30 GUARANTEED SEATS; 3 LOVEWRECKED 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS; 4 UNITED 93 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS; 5 SUPERMAN RETURNS 2:00, 5:10, 8:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
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M2 MARKET! MARKET!: 1 SUPERMAN RETURNS; 2 SUPERMAN RETURNS; 3 SEE NO EVIL; 4 LOVEWRECKED; 5 UNITED 93
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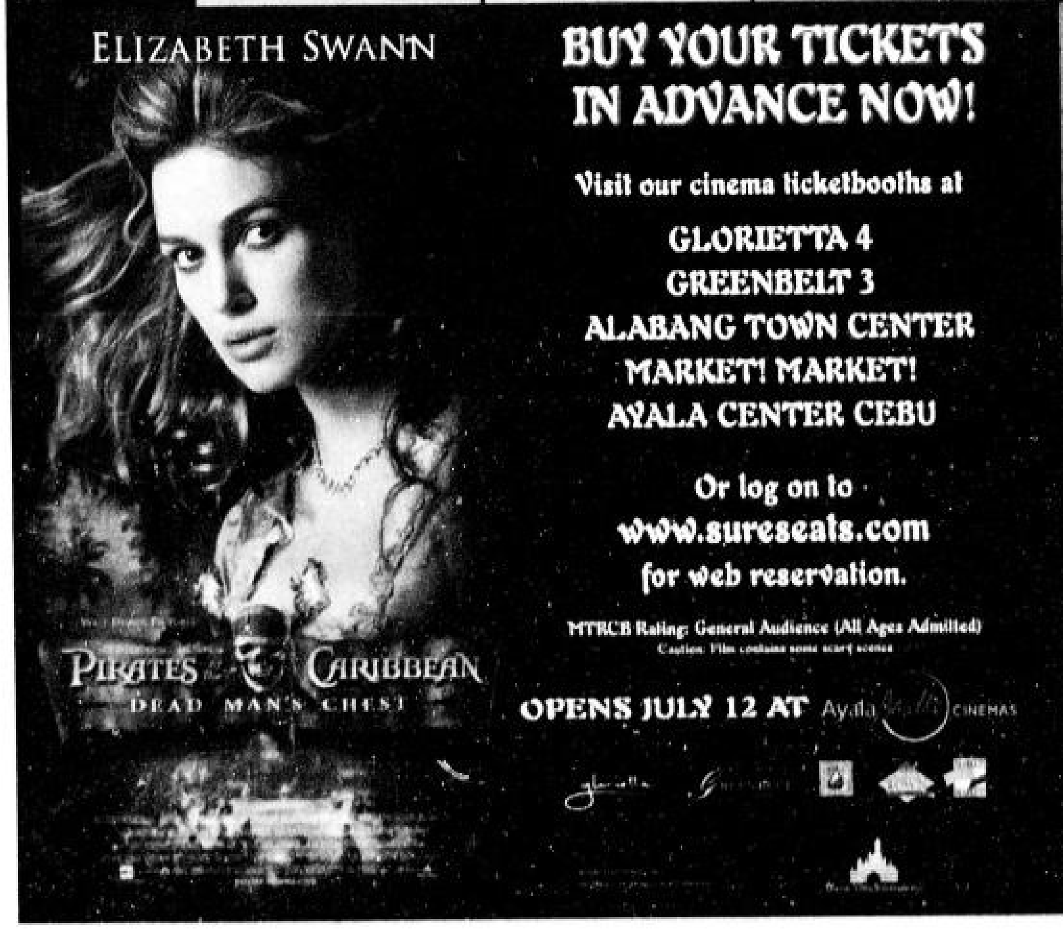

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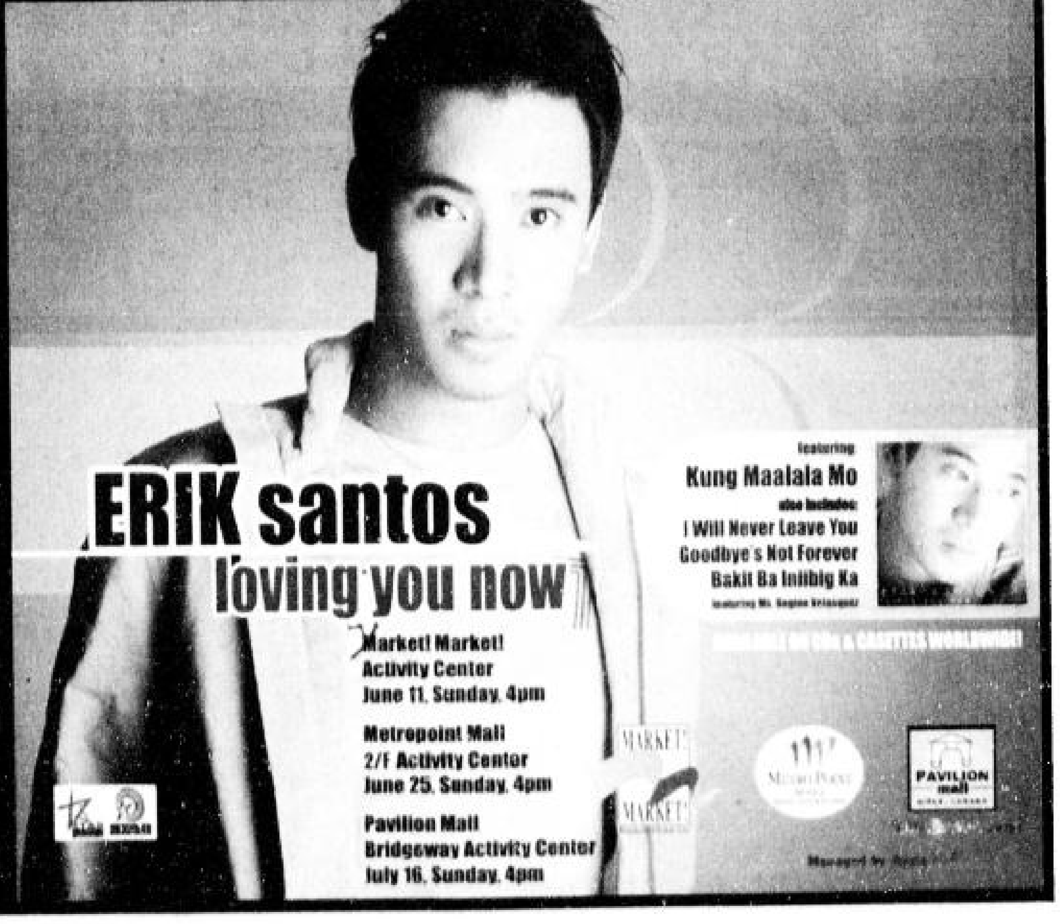

Market! Market! Activity Center June 11, Sunday, 4pm
Metropoint Mall 2/F Activity Center June 25, Sunday, 4pm
Pavilion Mall Bridgeway Activity Center July 16, Sunday, 4pm

Would Tirso & Mia do it again?

SEASON 2 champions Tirso Cruz III and Mia Pangyarihan

By Marinel R. Cruz

TAKE FIVE

"SHALL WE DANCE" SEASON 2 GRAND champs Tirso Cruz III and Sexbomb Mia Pangyarihan would think twice before joining another dance contest.

After all, they said, what they did for the finals night on June 25 was no mean feat. They had to compete with "more experienced" dancers like Mystica and partner Miguel dela Serna, Joshua Zamora and Janeth Somosot, Desiree del Valle and Dennis Sy.

Tirso and Mia were also scrutinized by three judges—Audie Gemora, Regine Tolentino and Edna Ledesma.

And despite their hectic individual schedules, they had to rehearse five dance numbers with a maximum of 12 hours practice time.

According to associate producer Nelson Alindogan, each team was instructed to dance the *pasadoble*, jive, rumba and cha-cha, and was told to pick a dance of their choice.

Viewers rewarded Tirso and Mia's hard work with an overwhelming text vote—the "sole basis" of the decision, according to Alindogan. "The judges [simply] gave comments to help the viewers along."

Did you expect to win?

Tirso: Of course I wanted to win. Actually, all groups deserve to be champions. I didn't expect to win the Texter's Choice award, though, so I'd like to thank our friends and fans. This is not a one-man effort. Anna Palma, our dance instructor, joined our team in the third week of the monthly finals. She proved to be very helpful.

Mia: Honestly, I thought we'd lose. I kept thinking, "We don't stand a chance here."

How many hours did you set aside for practice?

T: We were given only a total of 12 hours to rehearse for the five numbers. It was up to us, how to divide them. The problem was, it was impossible for us to fix a practice schedule. We rehearsed in dance studios owned by Regine (Tolentino), Geline (Eugenio), or the Club 88 on Samat Street in Mandaluyong City where professional dancers practiced. Sometimes, we rehearsed at the Sexbomb studio.

What were your biggest hurdles?

T: Rehearsal time was our biggest problem. Anna wasn't always around. Mia and I had to turn down several job offers. I'm not a dancer... I needed time to learn my steps.

M: *Kuya* Pip (Tirso's nickname) is the oldest male among the competitors, [so] there were moves he couldn't execute. He couldn't do lifts, or really fast steps. I had a hard time, too. The moves of real ballroom dancers are different. I kept thinking, "*Sayang naman ang* effort *ni* Kuya Pip, *hindi naman kami mananalo*."

Would you join another dance contest?

T: When this came about, I didn't look at it as a competition. But after the first week, I realized that if I didn't give this my all I would embarrass myself and my partner. I couldn't take it lightly and shortchange the viewers.

I'm not sure I'd do it again [but] I'd like to continue dancing with Anna or Edna (contest judge and last year's Blackpool Dance Festival grand champ).

M: Sure, but not a competition against dance instructors. *Hindi ko kaya talaga.*

("Shall We Dance," hosted by Lucy Torres, airs Sundays on ABC 5. Featured in its third season which started on Sunday are pairs Wilma Doesnt and Neil Gasic, Asi Taulava and Ana Coloma, Michael Flores and Marianne Camacho, Sheree and Efren Ibo.)

OPENS JULY 12
HIGHLY ENTERTAINING, DELIGHTFUL AND HEARTWARMING
GRADED "B" BY CEB
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
EDDIE GARCIA GLORIA ROMERO
CHERRY PIE PICACHE DIANA ZUBIRI
CHRISTIAN VAZQUEZ ALFRED VARGAS
KEANNA REEVES as Cristy and JOEY MARQUEZ
In alphabetical order
JASON ABALOS
TERENCE BAYLON
DION IGNACIO
MICHELLE MADRIGAL
& ALWIN UYTING

I wanna Be Happy
You can choose your friends but not your relatives
90.7 LOVE RADIO
written and directed by
JOSE JAVIER REYES
a SEIKO Films Presentation

MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
The Funny Girl from She's THE MAN is back in another Hilarious Romantic Comedy

AMANDA BYNES
To get the guy of her dreams, One girl is really going overboard.
LOVE WRECKED
NOW SHOWING
CHRIS CARMACK JAMIE-LYNN DiSCALA JONATHAN BENNETT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Thursday July 6, 2006

THEY WILL BE THE JUDGES. YOU WILL BE THE JURY.

Philippine Idol
ABANGAN SA JULY 29!
ABC Iba tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	V League				Sentro	Worst Case Scenario	SOS		Wan Yan Sa Lola Ko		Big News	Dokyu			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	A Love To Kill	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season 4)		30 Seconds To Fame	[illegible] Sports World	Amazon		Andromeda (Season V)		Mondo Magic	Mondo Magic	Fear Factor (Season VI)		Supernatural (Season 1)		Hex (Season 2)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename: Kids Next Door The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy Double Episodes	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons - Double Episodes		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dice	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Anak Ni Waray Vs. Anak Ni Biday				Nasaan Pa [illegible]				Ang Tisoy Kong Pogi				Starzan				Halik Ng Sirena	
Cinemax		Indiscreet			Fast Getaway (4:35 PM)			And Justice For All				Freddy vs. Jason			The Nugget			Glass Trap (11:10PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Crossing Jordan		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Psychic Detectives	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		What Should You Do?		Cold Case		E-Ring	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	[illegible]	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie Mcguire	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN			Tour De France 2006	X Games 11 - Day 3 Part 1				Motorsport Asia	Total Tennis 05 Roundup	Pool Snooker Premier Snooker League 05		Germany Tonight		Sportscenter Germany	Pool Snooker World Pool League 05 Poland		Pool Snooker World Pool League 05 Poland		Sportscenter Asia
ETC		American Dreams 3		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	Special Programming		EWTN Live [illegible] With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY		Love Of The Condor Heroes		Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Empire (3:15 PM)						Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Doc Martin		Spooks					Spooks (11:45PM)
HBO				Balto 3: Wings Of Change			Impulse				Anacondas: The Hunt For The Blood Orchid			Friday Night Lights				Hellboy (11:20PM)	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mama de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	[illegible] Kong [illegible]		Global Family Series		ME TV		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics Anime	Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show With David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central [illegible]	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?		Good Finds	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Punk'D			MTV Hits (with [illegible])					Get Spotted				TRL		Punk'D			
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Naked Science: Earth's Core		Top 5 - America Unveiled		WOW! Born Wild		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Megastructures: USS Virginia		Naked Science: Who Built Stonehenge	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]			Bayan Ko [illegible]	Teledyaryo [illegible]		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Pulso ng OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob [illegible] Right On Top	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up! [illegible]	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly OddParents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly OddParents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Wavey				Lakbay				Kamandag Ng Kris				Ober Da Bakod 2				[illegible]
Ctv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Outlaw Star	Galaxy Angel	MMS (My Music Station)		Mona		Phoenix	Irene	Fireworks	Damo	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon Balita	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports			Boxing Greatest Classics			2005 US Open 8-Ball Champ		2006 [illegible] Open Finals		2006 [illegible] Open Finals		NBA Classic: '75 NBA All Star Game				Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	2006 Thomas Cup Games	
Sports Plus				Boxing: [illegible] Classic Fights		World Poker Tour 2				Auto Focus		World Game		FIFA World Cup [illegible]			Potent 14		
Star Movies			Chariots Of Fire				Puerto Vallarta Squeeze (5:35 PM)				Belly Of The Beast			[illegible] Underdog Story					
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	[illegible] In The [illegible]	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	The Simple Life: [illegible]		Scrubs	Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	The Simple Life [illegible]
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Sports	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		Joey (8:20 PM)	Ghost Whisperer (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

BUSINESS
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Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** • *Assistant Editor* **Corrie S. Narisma**
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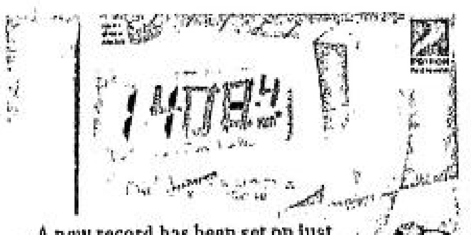
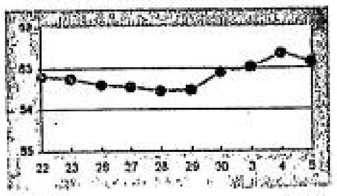

A new record has been set on just one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Inflation eased further to 6.7% in June

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



JUNE JULY

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.85 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 5, 2006

Y 115.04 = $1

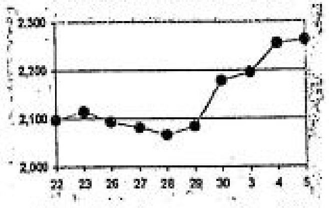
As of 5 p.m., July 5, 2006

GOLD: $626.50-627.00

per ounce Hong Kong, July 5, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.26-percent higher yesterday to hit their best levels in about a month as investors were cheered by news that inflation had slowed in June, dealers said.

At the same time, they said the gains were limited after North Korea's test launch of up to six missiles was widely criticized, stoking

SHARES/ B2

Strong peso tempered impact of VAT on prices

By Michelle V. Remo

THE INCREASE IN CONSUMER PRICES slowed further to 6.7 percent in June from a year ago as the stronger peso helped temper the effects of higher fuel prices and the imposition of the value-added tax.

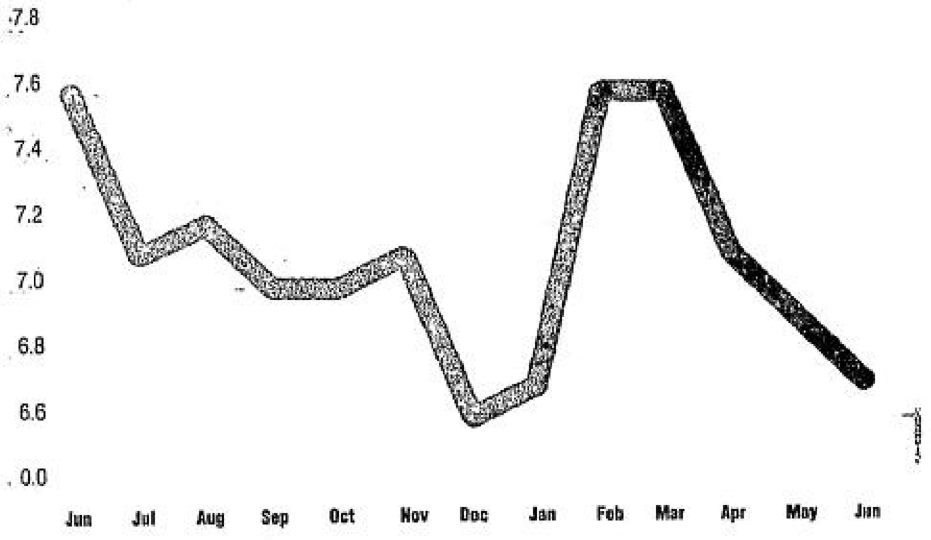
June inflation fell at the lower-end of the 6.5-7.2-percent range projected by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and better than the 6.9-percent forecast made by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Dennis Arroyo, Neda's policy and planning director, said latest developments on price movements would likely bring down full-year inflation to a rate lower than the official projection of 7.3-7.9 percent for the entire 2006.

Except for housing and repairs, all commodity groups, including food products, posted a slower inflation rate last month, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

INFLATION/ B2

INFLATION RATE
June 2005 to June 2006



Accenture to expand RP operations

By Daxim L. Lucas

ACCENTURE, ONE OF THE world's biggest consultancy and outsourcing firms, will increase its presence in the country later this year by pumping in more investments in facilities and increasing its manpower compliment.

In a briefing, company officials said the expansion was being made to meet the large demand for outsourced services—projected to grow at an average of 12 percent a year in the coming years—from its overseas clients.

"We have a plan to grow our Manila Delivery Center in the area of 40 percent to 50 percent next [fiscal] year," Accenture technology and delivery COO Basilio Rueda said during the briefing.

The company's local delivery center—its name for centralized offices catering to various clients' needs—presently has a manpower compliment of 7,500 staffers.

By the end of the next fiscal year, Rueda said the company's local unit was expected to have a total manpower compliment of up to 12,000, representing an increase of almost 5,000 employees.

More importantly, the Accenture official said the firm would invest some $20 million in its local operations over the next 18 months to help it meet global outsourcing demand.

"This will be spent on facilities, technology building, [the setting up of] more delivery centers, BPO (business process outsourcing), and to hire new people," he said.

The new investment will be on top of the $50 million that Accenture has already sunk into the local economy over the last four years.

Rueda said the investment would further improve the company's capabilities in the consulting, technology and outsourcing businesses.

Of Accenture's 7,500 full-time employees at present, approximately 5,000 are employed in the information technology sector. Another 2,200 are connected with its BPO operations, while 350 are classified as support staff.

Accenture has eight facilities in Metro Manila with an existing capacity of 8,411 seats. More than 1,000 seats are expected to come online by next month as it completes its initial expansion phase.

In addition, the company also

ACCENTURE/ B5

IN THIS ISSUE
■ **Canadian firm to** double mining investment in RP /B2
■ **Clark body voids** Mimosa contract /B8

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until achieved.
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Canadian firm to double mining investment in RP

TVI Resource to spend another $25M in Zamboanga project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CANADIAN-AFFILIATED TVI RESOURCE DEvelopment Philippines Inc. yesterday announced it was pouring in additional investments of up to $25 million to expand its operations in the Zamboanga Peninsula following favorable results of a feasibility study.

John B. Ridsdel, TVIRD country manager, said in a briefing that the company would go into extracting sulphides--copper and zinc--in addition to mining for gold and silver in the same area.

Speaking at a forum hosted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines and the Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, Ridsdel said the final findings of the feasibility study showed the sulphide project in its Canatuan mine was "economically viable and desirable."

"This (expansion) still needs approval from our board of directors," the official said. "But the study suggests that we would be spending another $25 million between now and May of next year when we hope the project would have commenced."

Ridsdel said TVIRD was also conducting further exploration of the area since the sulphide deposits were seldom found by themselves, meaning there could be other minerals available nearby.

He said at least four areas in Canatuan were being searched for mineral deposits.

"Another significance of this is that our mining operation is the first such activity that is foreign-funded since the Mining Act of 1995 was passed," he added.

Asked how many jobs would be created from the expansion, Ridsdel explained that the same pit as that of the gold and silver project would be dug but only deeper. "Therefore we would make use of the same manpower and equipment currently in use," he said.

Based on the study conducted by consulting firm Norwest Corp. and completed last May 25, the sulphide deposit has a projected mine life of 65 years, assuming a production rate of 1,300 tons a day.

Over that period, the project would yield 51,600 ounces of gold, 84.4 million pounds of copper, 3 million ounces of silver and 21,400 tons of zinc.

The study showed that the average operating cost for the sulphide project was estimated at $28.52 a ton of ore milled while capital cost was pegged at about $23.3 million.

Total net cash flow after capital and before income tax was estimated at $98.2 million.

TVIRD started mining at Canatuan in May 2004. Through 2005, the firm embarked on a series of upgrades to the mine and mill facilities, which it said resulted in increased metal production.

TVIRD is the local unit of TVI Pacific Inc., which is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and is focused on the acquisition, exploration and development of mineral deposits in China and the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACOUNTANTS
PICPA Building, 700 Shaw Boulevard
Mandaluyong City

NOTICE OF MEETING
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

To ALL PICPA Members:

In accordance with the provisions of Article XIII, Section 1 and 3 of the By-Laws of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, notice is hereby given that the Annual Membership Meeting will be on Friday, July 21, 2006 at 1:00 pm at the Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Publication of Notice of Meeting
3. Certification as to Presence of Quorum
4. Reading and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
5. Business Arising from the Minutes
6. Report of the President
7. Report of the Treasurer
8. New Business
9. Determination of the place of the next annual meeting
10. Adjournment

We urge all members to attend the Annual Membership Meeting. For members who cannot be present in person, please accomplish and return to us the general proxy form. The general proxy form can be downloaded from the PICPA website www.picpa.com.ph or can be obtained from the PICPA National and Chapter Offices.

Arnel F. de Jesus
National Secretary

LGU to amend suit vs mining firm

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF Marinduque is keen on amending the $100-million class suit it filed against mining firm Placer Dome Inc. a US court and would want to exclude affected residents from getting compensation, documents showed.

In a copy of a facsimile from the Dallas-based law firm Diamond McCarthy LLP, which represents the Marinduque province, all remediation fees to be derived from winning the litigation would all go to the provincial government.

"The province does not seek to recover damages for individual injuries sustained by its citizens either to their persons or their property," paragraph 6, lines 13 to 14 on page 3 of the revised complaint said.

The revision is contained in the third amended complaint, which lawyer David Ammons indicated in the facsimile addressed to Marinduque Gov. Carmencita Reyes on June 27, 2006. Ammons is seeking the approval of Reyes and would file the revised complaint today in Nevada.

The amended complaint will also include Barrick Gold Corp. as a party to the case because Placer Dome sold all its mining rights to this firm.

The Inquirer tried to reach Reyes for her comment but was told the governor was in a meeting.

Members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan led by Board Member Melencio Go, Alfon Rey, Allan H. Nepomuceno and Nancy Induralde have sent a letter to Reyes stating their objection to the revisions.

"The individual injuries sustained by our citizens should be pursued at all cost. With regard to the inclusion of Barrick, an early dismissal being a non-party to the case may be a possible result," Go said in the letter to Reyes.

Placer Dome, former parent firm of Marcopper Mining Corp., is trying to push for the transfer of the $100-million class suit filed by the Marinduque government from the state of Nevada to the US federal court.

Of prevention and early detection:

The Executive Check-up Program of the Manila Doctors Hospital

Prevention and early detection are essential to maintaining one's health.

The average yuppie rushing in to a café for another cold drink, his third for that afternoon. A middle-aged woman covering her mouth as she hails a cab, trying to smother a cough she's been suffering from weeks now. A Septuagenarian brisk-walking for an hour at the park each afternoon.

Ordinary scenes. Easily overlooked because their common occurrence. Then again, it takes an expert eye to detect signs. Dryness of the mouth, for example, which prompts one to frequently take in fluids, can be a symptom of diabetes. Chronic cough often disregarded as a minor discomfort can similarly be symptomatic of a more serious health disorder. Finally, even the seemingly healthy person who exercises regularly and eats a sensible diet can still find value in regular visits to the doctor.

This is why regular checkups with the doctor can never be overrated. Dr. Ma. Socorro Garcia of the Manila Doctors Hospital is quick to emphasize this.

As head of Manila Doctors' Industrial Medical Services Department (IMSD), Dr. Garcia has many a time proved the merits of regular and thorough medical checkups in detecting early signs of diseases and even identifying predisposition to health disorders resulting from certain lifestyle and health history factors.

The fast-paced life of the average urban dweller also presents several risk factors of health disorders. Work-related stress leading to high blood pressure, smoking and drinking habits, sedentary work that deprives one of exercise are only a few of the often ignored elements of one's daily life that may lead to health problems.

Furthermore, the prevailing economic conditions also put in sharp context the importance of vigilance when it comes to health. It is far more inexpensive to take preventative measures and health treatments rather than curative ones.

In view of all these, IMSD has been offering its line of check-up package s to suite the varying needs of the average health consumer. Called the Executive Checkup, these packages comprise a number of laboratory test and medical consultations for a comprehensive diagnostic. There are several Executive Checkup plans to choose from, both for in-patient and for out-patient treatment.

Premier package for a three-day confinement during which laboratory tests, x-ray, ultrasound, ECG, proctosigmoidoscopy and a series of medical consultations will be conducted. Plans A to C which include a two-day and one-day or overnight confinement, respectively. These packages differ only in the number of inclusive examinations, hence, the period of time the patient needs to be confined. In-patient packages range in price from P8,000 to P19,000.

For those on the move and cannot spare to much time for the checkup, there are also the out-patient Executive checkup plans. Health consumers can choose from the Cardiac work-out package, the Endocrine work-up, Pulmonary work-up, GI (gastrointestinal) work-up and Woman Care program. Prices of these range from P7,000 to P12,000.

In addition to these pre-set packages, Dr. Garcia and her team of seasoned professionals can also "re-package" or create new packages to tailor-fit certain health needs should a patient request it. Pricing for repackaged plans may vary and may not be consistent with the discounted rates in the pre-set plans.

The Executive Checkup as a pre-employment and/or pre-deployment exam offers the benefit of thorough, quick and reliable test results

Undergoing an Executive checkup

Appointments can be set ahead of time or "Walk-in" can also come in without one. Admissions time is between 4pm and 6pm from Sunday to Friday.

Checkup begins with an interview. This is done to determine the health risk factors that the patient is exposed to on a regular and/or inherent basis, i.e. family health history. These will all be factored in the evaluation of results from subsequent exams. This is also the patient's chance to ask for more information about the package and its inclusive exams or to request for the exclusion of any exam that the health professional attending may not find necessary.

A series of laboratory exams follow the interview, In in-patient packages, this is then followed by the number of basic medical consultations including Ophthalmology ENT and Dental to name a few.

The result of these exams and consultation will be compiled in a booklet and released to the patient within a week (3 to 7 business days) after he/she is discharged.

IMSD's Executive Checkup program also ties in with certain health insurance and HMOs like ValueCare, IntelliCare. Dr. Garcia advises patients to first call and check with their insurers before coming down for a checkup.

Success Stories

The Executive Checkup program has been an IMSD service offering since the 1950's, says Dr. Garcia. Since then, they have seen considerable growth in customers and in partnerships with business organizations for pre-employment and pre-deployment health exams.

Tie-ins with overseas staffing agencies have been particularly successful as IMSD services more and more Overseas Filipino Workers, both prior and after their deployment abroad. Currently, IMSD has a Palau-based coordinator to better organize health referrals and checkups for residents in Palau. The advantage of such partnerships to the common health consumers is the thoroughness of IMSD's health exams and the reliability of the rest results they issue to employers and staffing agencies.

At the end of the day it is really the patient who reaps the benefits. Dr. Garcia recalls a particularly special success story of her team involving a prominent patient (a high-placed government official) who complained of frequent coughs. After undergoing an Executive Checkup, a serious illness was detected of which the patient was completely unaware. The government official promptly went abroad for specialized treatment of his illness and eventually got better.

Only goes to show that it is always better to seek professional help. The IMSD of the Manila Doctors can be reached at telephone numbers 524-3011 extensions 3550, 3870 or at 528-8140 and telefax number 525-6623 for questions and appointments.

ADVT.

Inflation eased . . .

From page B1

The 6.7-percent inflation rate in June was better than the 6.9 percent in May and the 7.1 percent in April.

Core inflation, which excludes the volatile prices of food and energy items, eased to only 5.8 percent in June from 6.1 percent a month ago.

Average inflation for the first six months of the year settled at 7.1 percent, easing from 8.3 percent in the same six-month period last year.

"What happened was that the appreciation of the peso partly absorbed the pain brought by the VAT," Arroyo said.

He noted that the peso averaged at 53.12 to a dollar in June against 55.18 in the same month last year.

An increase in the value of a local currency helps control domestic inflation because it effectively makes imported goods cheaper.

Arroyo attributed the 6.7-percent inflation in June to the continued rise in fuel prices and increases in tuition and prices of school supplies in time with the opening of classes.

"The deceleration (of inflation) from May is consistent with the projected downtrend in inflation and provides support to the recent decision of the monetary board to maintain the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy rates," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Last week, the monetary authority decided to keep its policy rates unchanged, staying at 7.5 percent for overnight borrowing and 9.75 percent for overnight lending since October 2005.

Shares close higher

From page B1

concerns that political tensions could be on the rise in northeast Asia.

The composite index was up 5.86 points to 2,262.34, extending gains to a fourth straight day, after trading between 2,242.58 and 2,264.67. Volume was 2.96 billion shares worth P1.14 billion.

The broader all-shares index gained 4.51 points at 1,406.82.

Gains led losers 43 to 25, with 51 stocks unchanged.

"A deceleration in inflation eases the pressure on the central bank to increase its benchmark interest rates," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities. *(See story on this page.)*

Last week, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas voted to keep its overnight rates unchanged even though the US Federal Reserve jacked up its benchmark rate anew.

Keeping rates unchanged gives investors no compelling reason to shift to fixed-income assets and at the same time encourages businesses to seek loans to fund expansion.

"While the market ended in positive territory, buying sentiment has somewhat been dampened by what happened in North Korea," Vistan said, referring to North Korea's missile tests.

"Some investors have decided to take profits after the four-day rise. Investors are now a bit more defensive and cautious," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.

PLDT was down P5 at P1,970 following recent sharp gains while rival Globe Telecom added P15 at P970.

AFP

Globe unit cuts IDD rate

By Daxim L. Lucas

CONSUMERS ARE SET TO BENEFIT FURther from the rivalry between the country's biggest telecommunications firms as the prices of voice call services fall further.

The latest price cut came from a unit of Ayala-controlled Globe Telecom Inc., which slashed its rates for international voice calls for its prepaid call card service.

In a statement, Innove Communications Inc. said it has further dropped its IDD rate to allow customers to enjoy longer calls abroad.

"Globelines, Innove's consumer brand, offers the lowest IDD (international direct dialing) rate of P2.50 when connecting to five countries using Globe1--Innove's service," it said.

The P2.50-a-minute rate will be applicable to Globe1 to calls to the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia via a Globelines postpaid or prepaid line and Globelines payphone.

The phone firm chose these countries due to their high concentration of overseas Filipino workers and expatriate Filipinos--traditionally a significant source of revenues for telecommunications services.

"We continue to find ways to make communication services more affordable for our customers," Globelines marketing head Jose Antonio T. Mapa Jr. said. "Slashing the Globelines IDD rate to P2.50 from P4.50 a minute for these five popular calling destinations of Filipino consumers is just one way by which we show our subscribers that Globelines provides the latest services at the best possible rates."

The service was launched last June 20, 2006.

The old rate of P4.50 a minute for Globelines IDD would still be available for China, Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand, the company said.

Calls to other countries remain at $0.40 a minute.

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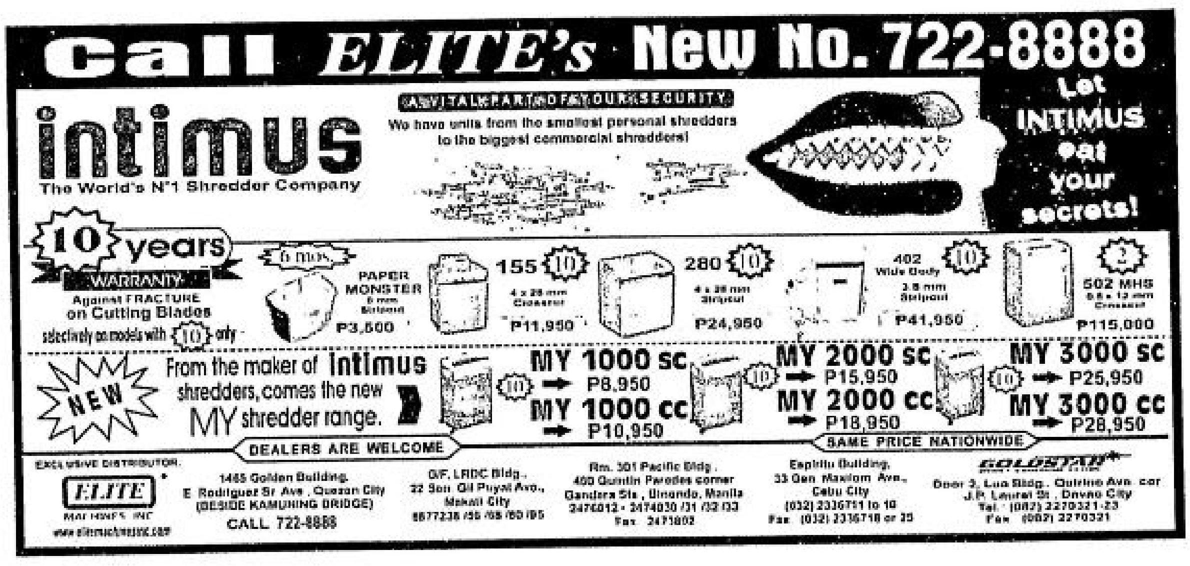

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Metrobank consumer lending group head Rowena R. Oliveros said, "The MetroHome Rate Protect Plus offers borrowers a distinct advantage over the usual longer term, fixed pricing of other banks. They can take advantage of market rates - as low as 9% p.a. during the first five years of the loan. Plus, the interest rate is guaranteed not to exceed 11.5% p.a. for 10 years."

Unlike similar programs that offer fixed interest rates, MetroHome Rate Protect Plus is unique because it allows borrowers the flexibility of annual repricing during the first five years of the loan with a rate cap guarantee. "Borrowers have the opportunity of paying less interest at the time when the outstanding balance is still high and therefore interest payments are heavier," explains Oliveros.

On the 6th to the 10th year, the loan carries a fixed rate of 11.5% p.a. "By fixing the interest rate on the 6th year onwards, borrowers are spared the surprises of rate surges when they are nearing repayment," adds Oliveros.

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PNOC unit prepares for IPO

Steniel seeking banks' OK on sale of assets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CARTON MAKER STENIEL MANUFACTURING Corp. is seeking its creditors' approval of the sale of idle assets worth about P300 million, company president Genesis Golingan said.

Golingan said the amount could be used to pay portion of the company's debts and to support a proposed restructuring plan.

The restructuring plan calls for a 10-year repayment of its P690 million worth of debts, including a three-year grace period.

Creditor banks Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Chinatrust Commercial Bank and Bank of the Philippine Islands recently declared Steniel in default on its debts that fell due two years ago.

Golingan said a prime asset being considered for sale was Steniel's 5-hectare carton manufacturing complex in Cavite and certain factory equipment in the site.

This year, Steniel shut down its Cavite facility after suffering heavy operational losses in the past years due to stiff competition and declining demand due to industry overcapacity in Luzon. The Cavite plant has a capacity to produce up to 60,000 metric tons a year of corrugated boxes.

Proceeds from the proposed asset sale will help fund Steniel's planned expansion in Cebu and Davao, considered high-growth markets.

In Davao, Steniel plans to put up a new plant either in Bukidnon, Cagayan, or Davao City to raise its capacity to 60,000 MT a year. Currently, its carton-making plant in Bunawan, Davao. has a capacity of 45,000 MT.

Golingan said the planned expansion in Davao was aimed at serving the growing banana export market in the province.

In Cebu, Steniel plans to put up a new manufacturing facility in the Mactan Export Processing Zone to boost capacity to 18,000 MT a year. At present, its Mandaue plant is producing 12,000 MT a year. The new plant will serve the demand from the growing furniture, semiconductor and food industries in Cebu.

The expansion plans for Cebu and Davao were estimated to cost P300 million.

Steniel manufactures paper products, paper board and corrugated carton containers.

Creditors are now reviewing their options, which may include foreclosing on Steniel's assets and entering into negotiations to find other ways by which the company can repay its debts.

Major creditor banks earlier said they were prepared to go to court against CVC Asia Pacific, the former majority shareholder of Steniel, for breach of an agreement. INQUIRER sources stressed that despite this plan, creditors were not hasty on foreclosing on the assets of the corrugated carton maker but were considering this as an option.

Company hopes to raise $300M for capex, BOT payment

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. ENERGY DEvelopment Corp. (PNOC-EDC) hopes to raise about $300 million from the sale of between 30 percent and 40 percent of its shares in an initial public offering to be held in November or early December.

In an interview with reporters yesterday, PNOC-EDC president and chief executive Paul Aquino said the IPO proceeds would be used to finance the company's short-term capital requirements and its remaining build-operate-transfer payments, which would last up to 2009. These, he said, would amount to around $60 million.

Portion of the IPO proceeds would be spent for the refurbishment of existing drilling equipment and the acquisition of new machinery, to enable the company to keep up with the rising demand for drilling services abroad, he said.

"We need to finance new drilling equipment because we've been getting many invitations to drill abroad," he said.

He said a complete refurbishment of PNOC-EDC's existing equipment as well as the purchase of a brand new rig would cost between $150 million and $200 million.

The balance of the expected $300 million in IPO proceeds, he said, would be used to continue exploration efforts in a geothermal site in Cabalian, Southern Leyte.

In an earlier interview, Eduardo Manalac, president and chief executive of PNOC-EDC parent firm PNOC, said a new well should be drilled in the area to confirm between 100 megawatts (MW) and 110 MW of possible new capacity.

The drilling should be done some time this year, he said.

Depending on the results of the drilling, he said PNOC-EDC would be able to determine the feasibility of developing the project, which would pave the way for a new power source for the Mindanao grid.

In terms of funding, he said PNOC-EDC had already talked to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for possible official development assistance (ODA).

PNOC-EDC's IPO was originally slated for September or October, but was pushed back by a couple of months to coincide with the anticipated improvement in market conditions toward the end of the year.

Aquino said that according to the company's financial adviser, the current market slump was expected to last two months, followed by another two months of consolidation, and a likely market improvement after that.

MEETING
N MONEY LAU RIN

ANTI MONEY LAUNDERING MEET
President Macapagal-Arroyo presented during the 9th annual Asia-Pacific group meeting on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing the achievements of the government's anti-money laundering campaign. Mick Keelty (right), APM commissioner of the Australian Federal Police also attended the conference. LYN RILLON

Ham dynasty

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THIS IS SOMETHING FOR THE PCGG TO ponder on: It was Tessie Sy who released the P150-million cash dividend for the EPCIB shares of Trans Middle East or TME.

And it appears she did it with…well, an "ulterior motive."

Recently, my neighbor Vic Agustin reported a secret meeting featuring, in starring role, Tessie Sy, daughter of mall operator Henry Sy of the SM group, which is trying to take over EPCIB.

Also in the meeting were Martin Romualdez, the representative of TME to the EPCIB board, and two other witnesses, one of whom supposedly arranged the meeting for Tessie Sy.

It seems that Tessie Sy was suing for peace with Romualdez. (Well, of course, after engineering his ouster from the EPCIB board during the annual stockholders meeting last May.)

Apparently, she complained that because of the recalcitrant Romualdez, who fought her over the SM group takeover of EPCIB, she was spending so much money on attorney's fees and, "other" legal expenses.

So much so that her army of lawyers was probably starting to look at her like a ham. You know—something for feasting!

And so during the meeting, Tessie Sy reminded Romualdez (in front of the two witnesses) that she had released the dividend so that TME would agree to the SM group takeover of EPCIB. She therefore expected his…well, "cooperation."

Even at the expense of the SSS and the GSIS—meaning, the millions of working class members of the pension funds!

There—Romualdez and TME had nothing to do with the release of the dividends to TME. Tessie Sy claimed authorship of the whole thing. All Romualdez needed to do was, well, close his eyes while the SM group put one over the members of the SSS and the GSIS.

And now some groups are suing TME, claiming ownership of the TME shares in EPCIB, pointing at the release of the dividends as the main issue.

It's clear that they should sue Tessie Sy instead.

* * *

LET'S BE clear about something on the abandoned project of the Comelec to automate the vote counting in the 2004 elections: The Supreme Court imposed a deadline on the Ombudsman to investigate the case of graft filed against Comelec officials.

Oh, and another thing: That deadline is fast approaching.

And the Ombudsman said there was "probable cause" in the case filed by some groups that were said to be taking up the cudgels for the company that lost in the Comelec bidding for the automation project.

But down here, we all know what happened to the Comelec project. The Supreme Court killed it only a few months before the 2004 elections, right when it was already in full swing.

By the way, then Chief Justice Hilario Davide actually sided with Justice Jose Vitug who opined that the case against the Comelec should be dismissed.

Reason: the case did not go through any trial of facts in the lower courts. Not even an investigation of the complaint in the Ombudsman? Not even in any hearing in any *barangay!*

In effect, by ruling on the case, the Supreme Court was acting as the trial court which, to Vitug and Davide, the high court was not supposed to do.

The suspicion at that time was that the Comelec automation project had to be stopped to allow the kind of "massive" cheating that somebody needed to win in the elections.

At the beginning of the case, the Supreme Court did not even think that the case merited a TRO to stop the Comelec immediately from implementing the project.

From out of nowhere, just a couple of months before the 2004 elections, which later on took some political color with accusation of massive cheating, the Supreme Court ruled that the contract was null and void.

There you have it: The Supreme Court told the Ombudsman to hurry up the investigation of impropriety in the Comelec project, while the Supreme Court, in effect, already ruled that the wrongdoings took place. I mean, which should have come first?

* * *

DURING lunch break, employees of the SSS hold protest rallies in front of the SSS head office in Quezon City.

They are simply venting frustration over the way SSS president Corazon de la Paz is running (or more precisely, NOT running) the pension fund.

For one, the SSS union members are pointing at her chronic absenteeism, which they said was the reason why the SSS service to its members is deteriorating.

For instance, the IT system of the SSS is useless. Its branches are never "on-line" with the main office. Plans and programs that were already approved by the commission were never fully implemented.

One possible reason was the SVP in charge of IT, a certain Miguel Roca, who is double-timing as a law student at the UP. The SSS union accuses Roca of a similar bad habit as that of De la Paz—absenteeism.

And so the commission, headed by Thelmo Cunanan, was forced to withhold from the SSS management additional IT budget, demanding that management should first do all the previous projects.

Really, SSS executives are saying that Cunanan, as SSS chair, is even more hands-on than the president.

Apparently due to the restlessness at the SSS rank and file, De la Paz assigned to herself three close-in bodyguards, armed with 9-mm pistols, who follow her around probably even all the way to the toilet, if they are not riding in their back-up cars, the fuel paid for with our hard earned contribution.

Running the SSS for De la Paz are three "special assistants" (i.e. consultants), namely Lucito Sioson, Art San Gabriel and Nazario Cabuquit. Each of them receives P150,000 a month, excluding perks and what have you, which they must get for sitting in the boards of companies as SSS representatives.

Again, these are mere consultants.

* * *

OUR INSURANCE playboy reportedly claimed that his company already settled with the BIR its documentary stamp tax obligation of some P800 million.

My contacts in the bureau said if that was so, he should go to town with copies of the payment receipt.

But the question is, according to BIR insiders, where did the money go? It is possible that he was referring to the P5 million that, way back in 1998, his company was said to have spent to silence the BIR top official at that time?

That, definitely, is not the same as settlement!

That is just similar to the maneuver that somebody did to avoid going to jail after that terrible accident involving a pedestrian and a speeding brand new Porsche sports car some time ago.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 5, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	9,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	32	31.5	32	678,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50	52	50	52	803,700
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.4	1,160,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	73	75.5	73	75.5	213,400
International Exch. Bank	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	21,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	35	36	35	36	265,400
Philippine National Bank	34	34.5	34	34.5	2,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	1,400
Security Bank Corp.	47	48	47	48	77,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	45	46	45	46?	73,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	150,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1660	1660	1660	1660	1,440
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	2,500
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2070	2100	2070	2100	680
Ivantage Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	1,747,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	42.5	43	42.5	43	42,400
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	45	45	45	357,800
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	27,700
Manila Electric Co. B	22	22.5	22	22.5	784,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	318,000
Petron Corp.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.97	2,032,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	6,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	29,000
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	8	8	8	8?	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	1,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	33	33	32.5	33	442,500
Pancake House Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	2,000
Roxas Holdings, Inc.	2.65	2.8	2.65	2.8?	587,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65	65.5	65	65.5	35,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	71.5	71	71.5	68,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	263,300
Vitarich Corp.	2050	21	205	205	850,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.27	910,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.48	1.54	5,772,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	10,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.5	4.55	4.5	4.55	231,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	120,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.08	0.0925	0.08	0.09	81,500,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	900,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	385	392.5	385	390	317,360
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	3,620,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4	862,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.74	1.74	2,139,000
APC Group Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	720,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	455,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.98	1	0.98	0.99	1,230,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	8,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	1,094,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	1,593,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	90,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	1,078,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	120,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	5,050,000
SM Investments Corp.	216	216	215	215	145,520
South China Resources Inc.	0.84	0.89	0.84	0.89	360,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.05	0.055	0.05	0.05	2,900,000
Wellex Industries Inc	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	200,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12.25	12.5	12.25	12.25	6,266,700
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.06	11,281,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	2,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	520,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2	2	1.98	2	695,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	10,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	40,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.56	0.58	0.56	0.58	4,440,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	800,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	1,875,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	13,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	6,199,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	3,730,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	442,200
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	280,000
SM Development Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	28,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.8	3,914,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	130,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	4,700,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15.75	16.25	15.75	16.25	94,600
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.24	1.28	959,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	955	970	955	970	72,340
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.55	3.6	3.5	3.6	535,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1970	1970	1965	1970	188,620
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	200,000
Imperial Res	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.06	2.08	233,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	2,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	1,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	381,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals, Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.6	160,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	162,500
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	411,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	115,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	150,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	62,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	45,000
Paxys Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	209,800
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	32,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	8.3	8	8.1	4,227,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	4,330,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,430,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	5,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	210,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.35	6,929,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.35	4.4	4.35	4.4	8,511,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28	28	28	8,500
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	810,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	20,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,410,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	.011 1	415,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	242,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.22	1.32	1.22	1.26	1,180,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.26	1.32	1.22	1.28	1,325,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.75	711,500
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	232,90

DISCLOSURES

MARIA Paz D. Lim, first vice president of **Philippine National Bank**, has been designated acting bank treasurer, following the untimely demise of first senior vice president Sylvia Chan-Lim.

* * *

STOCKHOLDERS of **International Exchange Bank** will have their annual meeting on Aug. 3, 4 p.m. at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati. Stockholders of record as of July 4 are entitled to attend and vote.

* * *

FORMER **House of Investments Inc.** director Yvonne S. Yuchengco, who resigned last June 26, has advised the company that she would not run for reelection as director during the annual stockholders' meeting on July 21.

* * *

SAN Miguel Corp. said Faustino F. Galang and Francis H. Jardeleza, both directors and principal officers of the corporation, had subscribed to 20,000 shares each through the employee stock purchase plan on June 30.

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

July 5, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.781250	1.000000	52.7760
Japan	Yen	0.006809	0.008715	0.4599
United Kingdom	Pound	1.441953	1.845700	97.4087
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100576	0.128737	6.7942
Switzerland	Franc	0.638120	0.816793	43.1071
Canada	Dollar	0.705991	0.903669	47.6920
Singapore	Dollar	0.494838	0.633392	33.4279
Australia	Dollar	0.581244	0.743992	39.2649
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.072281	2.652520	139.9894
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208300	0.266624	14.0713
Brunei	Dollar	0.493276	0.631393	33.3224
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000110	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.020602	0.026371	1.3918
UAE	Dirham	0.212840	0.272435	14.3780
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.280000	67.5533
Argentina	Peso	0.253447	0.324412	17.1212
Brazil	Real	0.358898	0.459390	24.2448
Denmark	Kroner	0.134058	0.171594	9.0560
India	Rupee	0.016988	0.021744	1.1476
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214159	0.274123	14.4671
Mexico	New Peso	0.070580	0.090342	4.7679
New Zealand	Dollar	0.475705	0.608902	32.1354
Norway	Kroner	0.125490	0.160627	8.4773
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012993	0.016631	0.8777
South Africa	Rand	0.111289	0.142450	7.5179
Korea	Won	0.000830	0.001063	0.0561
Sweden	Kroner	0.109142	0.139702	7.3729
Syria	Pound	0.015050	0.019264	1.0167
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024316	0.031125	1.6427
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000364	0.000466	0.0246

EO removing export fees drafted

Helping industry without draining state coffers

By Michelle V. Remo

TEVES

THE GOVERNMENT HAS FINALized a draft executive order that lifts various fees and charges imposed on exporters.

The draft order, prepared by the National Tax Research Center (NTRC), has been submitted to Malacañang for the approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the Department of Finance had agreed to the proposed lifting of the various fees charged on exporters, saying this would help boost the country's export sector without necessarily draining the state coffers.

A technical working group composed of the DOF, Department of Trade and Industry and NTRC agreed to remove these fees and charges, saying the move would cost the government only about P30 million in revenue a year. Fiscal authorities said the amount was something the government, still confronted with a budget problem, could afford.

Under the draft EO, the government said that removal of the export fees would help improve the country's economic growth, as the fees and charges had been found to be adversely affecting the competitiveness of the export sector.

Donald Dee of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry earlier said the plan to withdraw export fees would not only lower the cost of doing business for exporters but also simplify and ease trading procedures.

Exporters are required to pay several fees, including those charged for inspection and clearance, before they can ship out their products.

"The country's economic recovery program recognizes the role of exports in hastening the attainment of economic goals," according to the draft EO.

The draft EO, if signed, would require concerned government agencies and government-owned and -controlled corporations to submit to the DTI, through the Export Development Council, proposals on how export documentation procedures could be further simplified.

The lifting of export fees would benefit mainly small players in the export industry, as many big exporters, particularly those in economic zones, are already exempted from such fees.

The move reflects the government's desire to prioritize the export sector in term of state assistance.

While there are moves in Congress to rationalize fiscal incentives granted to the business sector, such as through the removal of tax- and duty-free perks deemed unnecessary, exporters are not seen to be affected.

The Senate committee on ways and means, headed by Sen. Ralph Recto, is preparing a bill on the rationalization of fiscal incentives. The committee's plan is to limit fiscal incentives, as much as possible, only to exporters. The bills will be up for deliberations once Congress resumes session later this month.

HGC guarantee up

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOW INTEREST RATES AND strong remittances from overseas Filipino workers have fueled a robust demand for low- and medium-cost housing in the Philippines, the state-owned Home Guaranty Corp. said.

In an interview, HGC president Gonzalo Bongolan said the robust demand had allowed his agency to post P51.41 billion in outstanding guarantees last year, or 23 percent higher than previous year's level. The guarantees covered 227,099 shelter units.

HGC is the only government institution that guarantees against credit risks in housing. It covers both the housing loans of home buyers and those of the subdivision developers. It is one of the five key shelter agencies supervised by the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) chaired by Vice President Noli de Castro.

"We've settled all unpaid guaranty obligations to private institutions. We brought down the default ratio from an average of almost 10 percent yearly to less than one percent in the last four years," Bongolan said.

HGC reduced its workforce by 70 percent from 391 to 107 permanent employees, resulting in a payroll reduction of 60 percent per month, or from P17.6 million to only P7 million.

Fujitsu seeks bigger share of imaging market

TECHNOLOGY FIRM FUJITSU Philippines Inc.—which forms part of one of the country's leading group of export manufacturers—yesterday launched a full line of document imaging scanners in a bid to tap a cross section of the imaging market, including homes, small offices and big companies.

Peter G. Tan, company president and chief executive, said the move involved the relaunch of the firms' scanner products since it had been making the machines for a long time although this was little known to the public.

Fujitsu Philippines launched five new products ranging from an entry level unit that can scan both sides of a document at up to 18 pages a minute, to a huge volume production unit that can process up to 100 sheets per minute or some 100,000 sheets a day.

He added that the key features that set the Fujitsu scanners apart from other brands include their charge coupled device (CCD) technology "for vibrant color reproduction and crystal clear images, even when the documents being scanned are not lying perfectly flat against the scanning unit."

Another feature is the automatic document feeder which saves users from the tedious task of manually feeding documents into the scanner and allows the scanning of large volumes of documents at high speed for increased productivity.

Fujitsu Philippines chair Shigeo Tsubotani said the local Fujitsu group, which has three manufacturing facilities and three offices in the country, had so far invested a total of $850 million in the country.

"We have a total of some 10,000 employees and we ship out some $1.2 billion worth of goods yearly," Tsubotani said.

Ronnel W. Domingo

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RP to import more rice from Thailand, China

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORity will import an additional 34,880 metric tons of rice from China and Thailand to beef up the country's buffer stocks during the lean months of July to September, which will cost the government some P540 million.

The state-run trading firm awarded the country's required import allocation to Chinese firm Daewoo International Corp. and Thai firm President Agri Trading, which would bring in 24,880 metric tons and 10,000 metric tons, respectively, according to NFA Administrator Gregorio Tan Jr.

Tan said the first rice shipment of 7,500 MT will arrive within the month, 12,500 MT will follow in August and the rest by September or before harvest begins in October.

The NFA is tasked to maintain a 30-day buffer stock of about 930,000 metric tons of rice to prevent a shortage. The agency is set to import a total of 1.64 million metric tons of rice this year. As of the first week of July, about 1 million metric tons have been shipped to meet the daily domestic rice consumption requirement of at least 31,000 MT.

According to Tan, the NFA would continue importing rice despite the expected increase in rice production to about 14.9 million to 15.4 million metric tons.

He explained that the rising Philippine population has put more pressure on the country's food supply, with the average daily rice requirement of the country hitting 31,000 metric tons.

The agency, he said, had to resort to importation to meet the rising demand for the staple.

"Even if we become self-sufficient in rice this year, we will have to continue importing for our buffer stock," he added.

Subsidy issue feared to affect rice program

THE FARM SECTOR IS GETTING restive due to a lingering row over a subsidy scheme that allegedly favored a single supplier of hybrid rice seeds.

The row threatens to dent the credibility of President Macapagal-Arroyo's hybrid rice program as its implementing agencies came under fire from farmers' groups over supplier subsidy and poor seed performance issues.

One of the biggest group of rice farmers in Northen Luzon recently called for the scrapping of the multimillion-peso subsidy while the scheme and the quality of the hybrid rice seeds sold by the supplier were being probed.

The North Luzon-based West Tanat Multipurpose Cooperative (WPMC) said " the Department of Agriculture's apparent preference for the subsidized supplier over the others may have hindered it from responding to the call of farmers for an investigation of allegations that the program had not resulted in better harvests and economic returns for rice farmers."

Farmer-leader and WPMC chair Melany Aquino said the agriculture sector had been asking the DA to look into reports that the use of the hybrid rice seed supplied by the favored seed company "had been less profitable compared with the regular variety since farmers had to spend more for inputs and labor."

The apparent poor performance of the variety may have spurred the 68- to 78-percent dropout rate for farmers participating in the program, Aquino noted.

Aquino said the dropout rate and the reported failure of the hybrid rice variety to improve farm yield "could seriously dampen the farmers' expectation that the program would help improve their plight."

Accenture . . .

From page B1

operates two disaster recovery facilities in Laguna, and four third-party disaster recovery sites within Metro Manila.

The company has been in operation in the Philippines since 1985, and serves more than 80 clients.

For the delivery center, Rueda said its clients were exclusively foreign, many of which are included in the Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 lists.

The US market continues to be the biggest user of local Accenture talent, accounting for about 80 percent of revenues, followed by companies from Germany, the Nordic countries, Turkey, the UK, France and Denmark.

"For now, we have no Philippine clients for the delivery center but we are always revisiting this," he said.

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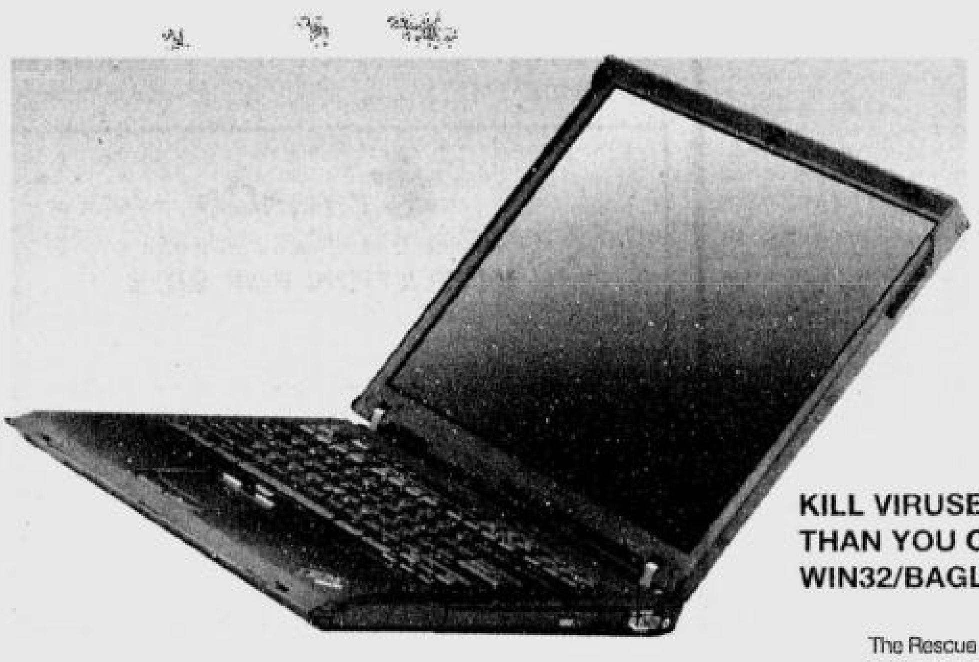

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Central Visayas exports up 12.5% to $1.12B in Q1

Semiconductors leads growth, but food, copra, rubber down

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—BUOYED BY THE robust performance of the electronics sector, overall exports from Central Visayas rose 12.55 percent in the first quarter this year.

Total exports in the first three months went up to $1.122 billion from $997.029 million last year, based on the statistics gathered from the Bureau of Customs and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).

"Preliminary figures for the first quarter this year already shows some positive trends as we see some interesting growth rates in various sectors despite the drop in some," Philippine Exporters Confederation Cebu president Allan Suarez said during a general membership meeting held here recently.

Electronics exports alone rose 41.47 percent, from $306.263 million in 2005 to $433.258 million in 2006.

Suarez, who was appointed Visayas representative in the Export Development Council, also noted the increase in exports of industrial goods (62.58 percent), consumer goods (17.79 percent) and information technology (IT) and IT-enabled services (500.56 percent).

On the other hand, he noted the drop in the exports of food products (31.85 percent) and traditional products such as rubber and copra (60.78 percent).

Of the top 10 exporters in Cebu, seven (Cebu Mitsumi, Lexmark Int'l Phils Inc., Pentax Cebu Phils. Corp., Muramoto Audio Visual Phils., Taiyo Yuden Phils., Integrated Microelectronics and Olympus Optical Technology Phils. Inc.) are engaged in the manufacturing of electronic products.

The others are involved in software development (NEC Telecom Software Phils. Inc.), garments manufacturing (Metro Wear) and seaweed processing (Shemberg Marketing Corp.).

The region's top markets are Japan, the United States, Hong Kong, China, Netherlands, Hungary, Singapore, United Kingdom, Taiwan and Korea.

Cebu accounted for the bulk of the exports of the region, which also covers Bohol, Oriental Negros and Siquijor.

Last year, the Central Visayas region exported $4.71 billion worth of goods and services, with electronics remaining the top export, Suarez said.

He, however, said that the export sector was finding it more difficult to do business because of the country's commitments to the World Trade Organization and other trade agreements.

Suarez also noted that the government regulations were also making it difficult for exporters as production inputs, such as the fuel costs, continued to increase.

Although the region's exports increased in value and volume, he noted that the bottom line of exporters continued to decline due to rising costs, he added.

Suarez also cited other issues such as the anti-smuggling bill, the ban on the use of abaca in the manufacture of goods and the Customs Brokers Act as among the major concerns of the export sector.

He urged the government to look at how it could help the export sector remain competitive in the global market by addressing these concerns.

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. #221-9400

INVITATION FOR BEST OFFER
(2nd PUBLICATION)

1. The Davao City Water District, through the Approved Budget for 2006 intends to apply the sum of P750,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under contract as listed below. Offer received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening of bid/offer.
2. The Davao City Water District now invites Bids/offer for the Supply of One (1) unit 2nd hand Water Tanker intended for the hauling of water for human consumption wih the following descriptions:
   Loading Capacity : 14 cu. Meter
   Aluminum Tank.
   Isuzu engine
   6 cylinder
   8 wheelers and a good running conditions
3. The award shall be given to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid. However the units is subject for the inspection of the DCWD authorized representative as part of the evaluation procedure before the award given to the LCRB.
4. Please attach picture and copy of latest registration certificate
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from Davao City Water District and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. up to 5:00 p.m.
6. Bid opening shall be at the DCWD BAC-A Secretariat Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City on July 27, 2006 @ 9:00 a.m.
   Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
7. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City
Tel. No. : 221-9400 (8000)
E-mail add : dcwd@davao-water.gov.ph
Fax No. 224-5392
Website : www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VIRGINIA S. MARIMON
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI–July 6 & 13, 2006)

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Republic of the Philippines
Province of Nueva Vizcaya
Municipality of Solano
Design, Site Development and Construction of the Proposed New Solano Public/Commercial Market Annex Building Project
Design and Construct/Build Scheme

The Municipality of Solano, by virtue of a duly approved Sangguniang Bayan Resolution, has authorized the Honorable Mayor Santiago O. Dickson to secure a loan from the Land Bank of the Philippines for the payment under the contract **Design, Site Development and Construction of the Proposed New Solano Public/Commercial Market Annex Building – DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT/BUILD SCHEME.**

The Municipality of Solano intends to apply the sum of **SIXTY FIVE MILLION PESOS** (P65,000,000) being the Approved Budget for Contract (ABC) as payments under the contract for the Design, Site Development and Construction of the Proposed New Solano Public/Commercial Market Annex Building. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

The Municipality of Solano through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) now calls for the submission of the Letter of Intents (LOIs) from potential Proponents/Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Design, Site Development and Construction of the Proposed New Solano Public/Commercial Market Annex Building. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Proponents/Bidders must submit their LOIs on or before the date scheduled below at the BAC Secretariat, Municipal General Services Office, New Municipal Hall, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya and secure the Eligibility Documents and General Project Information and Terms of Reference for the Project therefrom, upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Fifteen Thousand Pesos (P15,000.00). Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on August 4, 2006 at the Function Room New Municipal Hall Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Only those Proponents/Bidders passing the eligibility check and whose Architectural Plans and Outline Specifications passed the minimum design standards, performance and specifications criteria will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR – A) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, only to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from eligible Proponents/Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of R.A. 9184 a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Proponent/Bidder who was determined as such during the post-qualification.

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	July 7 - 23, 2006
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	July 10 - 27, 2006
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	July 28 - August 4, 2006
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	August 9, 2006
5. Issuance of General Project Information	August 11 - 16, 2006
6. Pre-bid Conference	August 16, 2006
7. Issuance of Terms of Reference	August 17 - 23, 2006
8. Submission of Architectural Design	August 30 - September 6, 2006
9. Result for the selection of Architectural Design	September 12, 2006
10. Issuance of Bid Documents	September 13 - 20, 2006
11. Supplemental Bid Bulletin	September 28, 2006
12. Receipt and Opening of Bids	October 27, 2006
13. Evalution of Lowest Calculated Bid	October 30 - November 6, 2006
14. Post-qualification	November 9 - 16, 2006
15. Resolution of Award	November 18, 2006

Interested Proponents/Bidders may secure and pay the amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) for the eligibility documents and submit their accomplished Eligibility Documents with the corresponding copy of the original receipt (O.R) of its purchase to the BAC Secretariat on or before the date scheduled. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Proponents/Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Proponents/Bidders.

Interested eligible Proponents/Bidders may obtain further information from the Municipal Government of Solano and inspect the Bidding Documents at the BAC Secretariat, Municipal General Services Office, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM of September 13 - 20, 2006.

Eligible Proponents/Bidders must submit their Architectural Plans and Outline Specifications at the BAC Secretariat as scheduled.

The Municipal Government of Solano will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Proponents/Bidders as scheduled on August 16, 2006, 9:00 AM, at the Function Room, New Municipal Hall, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Proponents/Bidders that passed the eligibility check and the minimum architectural plans design and outline specifications, design criteria, on the date as scheduled and upon the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P2,000.0). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Proponent/Bidder or his duly authorized representative as scheduled.

Eligible Proponents/Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before October 27, 2006 at 10:00 AM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on October 27, 2006 10:00 AM at the Function Room, New Municipal Hall, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below on October 27, 2006, 10:00 AM at Function Room, New Municipal Hall, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya.

Proponent's/Bidders must be willing to accept payments in the form of cash, bonds and other forms of financial instruments and/or long-term securities, and must be capable of undertaking the project either on a Semi-Turn-Key or Turn-Keys basis.

The required number of days to complete the works is 360 calendar days.

The Municipality of Solano reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Proponents/Bidders.

Waiver: The prospective bidder agrees and binds itself to abide by the final decision of the members of the BAC and further waives any legal action or claims against the LGU of Solano pertaining to the project now and the future.

BAC Chairman MR. ARNEL G. DOMINCEL
Name of Office Municipal General Services Office
Office Address New Municipal Hall, Brgy. Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya
Telephone Number (078) 326-5992
FAX Number (078) 326-5992

Signature of the BAC Chairman or Authorized Representative of the BAC Chairman

(PDI–July 6 & 13, 2006)

Plant more coffee, Nestle urges farmers

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—NESTLE PHILIPPINES said the Philippines needed to increase its production of coffee due to the increasing demand for one of the world's most popular beverages.

In a briefing during a meeting of the League of Corporate Foundations here last week, Lumagbas placed current domestic consumption of coffee at around 60,000 metric tons.

At a minimum growth of 3 percent a year, Lumagbas estimated that total domestic consumption would hit 78,000 metric tons by 2015.

However, the Philippines produces only 28,000 metric tons of coffee a year. To make up for the shortfall, it buys coffee from other countries, notably Vietnam, worth P1.5 billion.

Because of this, Nestle has encouraged farmers to plant coffee and jatropha, which are complementary crops.

The oil from Jatropha seeds has been developed into a fuel for heating and vehicles.

Jatropha oil sells for 40 cents a liter in the world market.

The province of Oriental Negros is heeding Nestle's call and is positioning itself to be a major coffee grower.

MAGUINDANAO'S TOP RICE PRODUCER. Members of the Dama Native Inhabitants Multi-Purpose Cooperative, the majority of whom are former Moro National Liberation Front combatants, sun-dry palay and fill up sacks (inset) at their newly-constructed, P1.6-million grains warehouse in Madidis, Datu Paglas, Maguindanao. The post-harvest facility, constructed by USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program, also serves as the cooperative's office and trading center, where more than 240 members store and sell their palay. The cooperative now boasts of P3 million in assets, a 35-fold increase from a year ago.

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date . June 12, 2006
Loan No.: CALYON
Contract No. Sp06.NPTBP.Vt-0073

1. The *National Power Corporation (NPC)* has received a loan from the *Buyer's Credit Facility arranged by CALYON through a Master Credit Arrangement* for *Northern Panay Project* and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract *Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Northern Panay 138/69kV Transmission Backbone Project.*
   Bidders if not a manufacturer shall purchase the equipment and materials from eligible source countries listed in the Calyon's Buyer's Credit Facility (United States, Austria, Belgium, England, Denmark, South Korea, Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland) and all expenditures for the plant and equipment made under the Contract will be limited to such plant and equipment.
2. The *National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)* administering the implementation of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the
   Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Northern Panay 138/69kV Transmission Backbone Project.
3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents at the *Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department, Ground Floor, Power Center, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Telephone No.: 981-2212, 981-2213, 981-4652; Telefax No.: 921-23-08.*
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting June 14, 2006 upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Forty Thousand Pesos (PHP 40,000.00).*
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2)-sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:
   One Hundred Seventy Six Thousand Two Hundred Seven US Dollars (US$176,207.00)
   The bid security must be included in the technical proposal.
   Pre-bid Conference shall be conducted on July 25, 2006.
   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on August 12, 2006 at 1:30 P.M. at the aforementioned address. Late submissions will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. The total contract duration for the project is **450 calendar days.**
10. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
11. All communications shall be addressed to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee at aforementioned address

(Sgd.) GUILLERMO R. REDOBLADO
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - July 6, 2006)

Plastics help mold new recycling trade in RP

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—DISCARDED plastic cups and plastic containers are nothing like the glass jars and steel bars his father's junkyard business used to trade in the 1960s.

But Romeo Lim, a recycling advocate, said the increasing volume of plastics discarded by households has convinced the government to finally support the long-neglected national recycling industry.

Lim and other waste management experts discussed the new role plastic waste products could play in the recycling business during the Benguet leg of the government's recycling collection program.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes promoted the event here last week.

Lim grew up buying metals and jars in Baguio City.

He now owns the oldest junkyards in Baguio, Benguet and La Union, which have shifted from metals to buying or collecting discarded plastic because of the rising demand.

Lisa Antonio, executive director of the advocacy group Philippine Business for Environment, said plastics have become a briskly traded commodity and have helped the government's agenda of shaping a proper solid waste management system for the communities.

The plastic waste are shipped to plants in different Asian countries, like Taiwan and Singapore, which convert it into plates that are then resold here for P10 each, she said.

The demand for plastic provides the government's recycling campaign an example of how trash can become an economic currency for people in the provinces.

Lim said however that metal waste, which is melted into construction steel bars, still fetches a higher price compared to plastic.

He said he grew up watching steel prices rise from P6 a kilogram in 1978 to P75 a kg today.

Plastic bottles only go as high as P10 apiece, according to the uniform rates suggested by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, but there is more plastic waste to be collected from households compared to metals, he said.

Speaking at the recycling drive here last June 24, Antonio said: "Today, they will buy your unwanted junk materials and they will channel them back to the recycling industry, so that recyclers can make new products... so they save on production costs."

As an example, she said every ton of recycled paper cuts energy used to produce new paper by 80 percent.

Antonio described recycling as "reverse tree-planting" because it stops paper makers from cutting 17 trees to make a ton of fresh paper.

She said recycling could help recover discarded plastic water bottles so these would not pile at the dumpsites.

Exporting raw plastic recyclables has become a multimillion-peso underground industry because these were purchased at dollar-denominated prices, she said.

The government-sponsored recycling project will keep the trade above-ground here soon, but local processing plants that convert plastics into new products could not compete with the price set by plastic exporters.

San Miguel Corp. is developing one such facility, but the latest feasibility studies indicate that it may not be able to match the price offered by recycling middlemen.

Antonio said recycling proponents have asked for some tariff support, but government has told them it would violate the World Trade Organization agreements on trade liberalization.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

IRENE BAUTISTA

This is to inform the public that the above person is no longer connected with **(FMEI) Fernando Medical Enterprises, Inc.** effective **June 28, 2006.**

Any transaction made or entered into after said date shall not be binding or honored.

(PDI – July 6, 2006)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC
The Energy Company

Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO. Tel. Nos. 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF 8" DIA. AND 10" DIA. HDPE PIPES FOR THE MINDANAO GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION FIELD (MGPF) ZERO CONDENSATE DISPOSAL SYSTEM
EDC 06-071

The Approved Budget is **P14,206,400.00** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is **100 calendar days.**

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o Noel A. Nicolasora) starting **July 6, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand Pesos (Php 1,000.00).

Site inspection shall be conducted on **July 21, 2006, 10:00 A.M.** at the Mindanao Geothermal Production Field (MGPF). For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **July 25, 2006, 10:00 A.M.** at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Bldg. 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on August 8, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI--July 6, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5282 / 5281

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID / RE-BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

	Approved Budget
9,000 bags of Silica Flour under FGK 60501	*PHP 3,343,000.00*
Various High Temperature Mud Additives under FGK 60502	*PHP 2,229,000.00*
under FGK 60503	*PHP 5,307,000.00*
Various Sizes of Carbon Steel Pipes under GE 513615/GJ 614501/GT 417834/GT 517331/GT 517441	*PHP 2,073,500.00*

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance upon payment of a non-refundable fee at the above address based on the following schedules:

PR No.	Date of Issue	Cost per Document	Contact Person
FGK 60501	June 28, 2006	PHP 400.00	Ms. Ma. Cristina Lynn M. Mercado Loc. 5282
FGK 60502/ FGK 60503	June 28, 2006	PHP 400.00	Ms. Ma. Cristina Lynn M. Mercado Loc. 5282
GE 513615 / GJ 614501 / GT 417834 / GT 517331 / GT 517441	June 23, 2006	PHP 200.00	Mr. Edgar Allan T. Sadernas Loc. 5281

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall also be held on July 6, 2006 for all the requisitions, 2:00 p.m. at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than 2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time) of July 20, 2006 for FGK 60501 and FGK 60502 / FGK 60503 and July 21, 2006 for GE 513615 / GJ 614501 / GT 417834 / GT 517331 / GT 517441. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--June 29 & July 6, 2006)

KBP launches search for 1st Radio Advertising Awards

THE KAPISANAN NG MGA BRODKASTER NG Pilipinas (KBP), the country's biggest, oldest, and most prestigious broadcast media group, whose members include majority of the biggest TV and radio broadcast networks in the country, announced that it is holding a first-ever search for radio advertising awards.

Dubbed as the "KBP 2006 Radio Advertising Awards," this one-of-a-kind endeavor, which is exclusive to advertisements produced for radio, aims to recognize outstanding and exemplary work in the field of radio advertising. This event would be a truly historic one that would remain unmatched in the annals of the local broadcast industry.

The objectives of the KBP 2006 Radio Advertising Awards are to encourage the production of radio advertisements that make full use of the characteristics of radio as a mass medium and to recognize excellence in the art and craft of producing radio advertisements.

The Awards is open to all advertising agencies, production houses, advertisers, and KBP-member radio stations in the country. Entries must be written and produced locally, not less than 15 seconds, and must have been aired for at least 15 days in at least 3 KBP-member radio stations.

Entries must be received by the KBP National office no later than 5 p.m. of the following dates: July 15, 2006—first and second quarter entries; Oct. 15, 2006—third quarter entries and Jan. 15, 2007—fourth quarter entries.

For other details regarding the 2006 KBP Radio Advertising Awards, call the Radio Ad Awards secretariat, Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas, 6th Floor, LTA Building, Perea St., Legaspi Village, Makati City, 815-1990 to 92, 892-4129, 815-1989 (fax), through email at kbp@pacific.net.ph, or visit www.kbpradioawards.com.

Contact Person: Rex Hirang/CP# 0917-8563127/ InfocampE8174921

MIGRATION GLOBAL ASSISTANCE
Worldnet 3F Zeta Building
191 Salcedo Street, Legaspi Village
Makati City
Tel. No. (02) 830 0205 local 21
Cellphone No. 0917 805 8129

URGENT JOB OPENING FOR

IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT

- At least a College Graduate
- Between 25-38 years old
- Excellent communication skills
- Efficient in office work especially computer systems

Please submit an application letter with 2x2 picture and bio-data.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

ACCOUNTING STAFF

A fast growing company engaged in freight & trucking services is in need of two (2) acctg. staff to assist in the var. jobs of its Acctg. Dept.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Female, at least 22-25 years old
- Accounting graduate (Not necessarily a CPA)
- Computer literate
- With at least 1 year work experience as accounting staff
- Capable of working with minimum supervision

Apply in person and bring transcript of records, other credentials and clearances from NBI, Barangay and Police.

NLG-TRANSMAN BROK. & FRT. SVCS. INC.
Rm. 212 Auro-Vir Plaza, 1695 Evangelita cor.
Gen. Lacuña St., Bangkal, Makati City
Look for Ms. Arlene S. Cruz

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lost **ALIEN CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION** of the following persons:

ACR E 194624 Maurizio Gibillini
ACR E 233517 Maria Gibillini
ACR E 233518 Mauriz Verde

If found return to Unit 1229, MEGA PLAZA, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Look for Richelle

(PDI--July 6, 2006)

BANK ACQUIRED ASSET FOR SALE

Location: Along Road Right of Way, Brgy. Maharlika East, Tagaytay City
Description: Vacant Agro-Residential Lot
Area: 11,572.00 sqms. (more or less)

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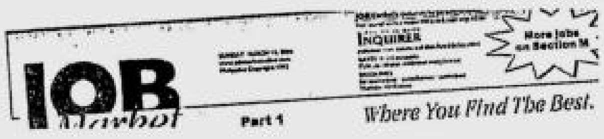


OBITUARIES

JORGE B. "BABY JUN" VARGAS III

Peacefully joined our Lord on 03 July 2006 at the age of 63.

His loving wife **Violet Dichupa-Vargas**; children **Marina Pilar** and **Alessandro Miguel**; son-in-law **Carlo Malig**; grandchild **Miguel Jorge V. Malig**; brother **Jose Mari L. Vargas**; in-laws **Barbara C. Vargas, Lily D. Alano, Rosemarie D. Kirzner, Daisy D. Montinola, David J. Dichupa, Jr., Zinnia D. Yang**; nephews **Henry Jorge C. Vargas** and **Jack B. Vargas**; aunts, uncles, in-laws, cousins, relatives and friends, give thanks to the Lord for the blessing of his life.

His remains lie in state at the La Funeraria Paz, Agoncillo Chapel, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Mass will be celebrated at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, 08 July 2006, to be followed by cremation, at the Main Chapel of the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment at 2:00 p.m. at the St. James the Greater Crypt, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City.

With grateful hearts to our Father in heaven, we announce the passing to eternal life of our beloved wife and mother

Imelda Villaverde Wong

who joined our Creator in a serene and prayerful manner last July 2, on a bright and peaceful Sunday morning.

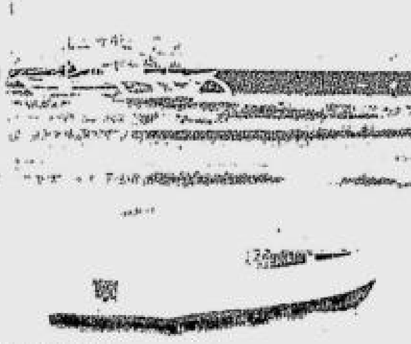
*We, her spouse **William**,*
*her children **Amy & Bay, Allan & Lenny,** and **Peter**,*
*her grandchildren **Alrick, Angel, Beanne, Alexa, Red** and **Judge***
thank our Lord for her beautiful and most fruitful 59 years.

We thank all those who touched her life and whose lives she has touched.

Her mortal remains were immediately cremated in accordance with her wishes. In lieu of a wake, a special mass and fellowship in her memory will be offered on July 11, 2006 at 9:00 am at St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Bel-air, Makati City.

Prayers and simple floral offerings to the Blessed Virgin will be greatly appreciated.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.



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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

FILOMENA "NENA" DELLOTA BAUSON

November 27, 1916 – July 2, 2006

Passed away in the grace of the Lord and into eternal life

Her husband Florencio "Porsing" Esculin Bauson†; her children and their spouses and grandchildren: Msgr. Vicente, Paulita and Arce Cusi, Judy and Armand Javier and their children Marc Martin, Margaret Pauline and Maria Isabel, David and Nini Batlcudos and their son David Paolo "Paopao" and Victor Marie "Bangbang" request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Bauson Family Residence in Panitan, Capiz. Interment will be on July 8, 2006, Saturday at 8 a.m. at the San Lorenzo Parish Church, Panitan, Capiz.

More CLASSIFIED ADS

Municipality of Solano,
TransCo *and*
Davao City Water District........ B6

In loving memory
on the
2nd Death Anniversary of

LYDIA DUMLAO VALDEZ

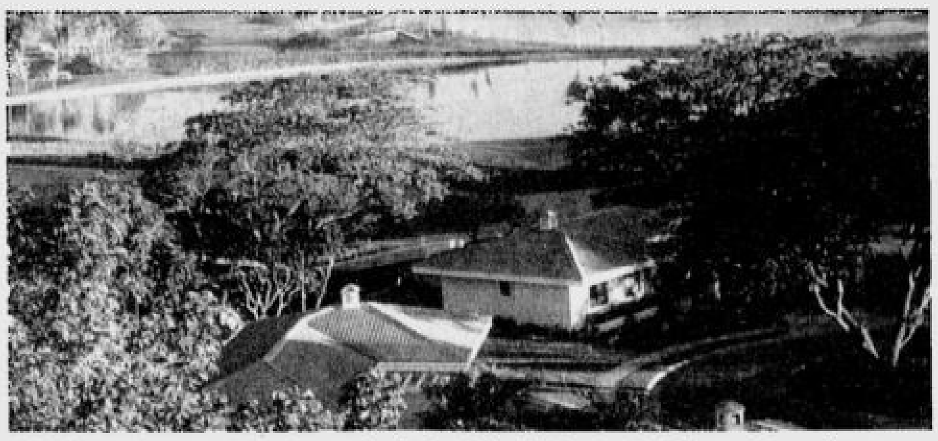
(April 10, 1920 – July 6, 2004)

Holy Masses will be offered today,
July 6, 2006 at:

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Shrine Parish	6:00 p.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish	6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Adoration Chapel	6:00 p.m.
Nativity of the Lord Parish	6:00 p.m.

Please remember Mommy in your prayers. Thank you.
Simeon M. Valdez, children: Bituin & Rico, Aurora, Cielo, Suerte & Avelard, Marie & Jesse, Fili & Lester and Noel, and grandchildren.

BUSINESS



CLARK Development Corp. has again declared the bidding for the Mimosa Leisure Estate a failure.

Clark body voids Mimosa contract

Korean firm fails to meet contract terms

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—THE state-owned Clark Development Corp. yesterday revoked the award it granted to the winning bidder of the 215-hectare Mimosa Leisure Estate here.

Antonio Ng, CDC president and chief executive officer, said CDC declared the bidding a failure due to the inability of NTM Jin Hung Joint Venture to sign the lease agreement within the period set by the bidding's term of reference (TOR).

Based on the TOR, Ng said the agreement was supposed to be signed 10 days upon notice of the award. The South Korean venture received the notice last June 5.

Ng said the TOR also specified that the minimum up front payment must be paid upon the signing of the lease agreement.

Based on NTM's winning bid, the firm should have paid P1.32 billion (80 percent of the minimum of P1.65 billion) plus six months rental worth $1.05 million.

The P26-million performance bond that NTM put up has been ordered forfeited following the failed bid.

This was the second time that the CDC declared the Mimosa bidding a failure.

The first was in 2004 when the winning bidder was found to have submitted fraudulent claims.

The government has been trying to privatize Mimosa since it seized the estate in 1998 following the failure of Mondragon Leisure and Resorts Corp. to remit P500 million in lease payments.

Ng said the Office of Government Corporate Counsel supported the decision of the CDC.

"Philippine bidding laws require strict compliance with TORs prepared by the CDC," he said.

The bids committee, he said, held a pre-bid conference where all bidders had every opportunity to raise issues, including payment terms embodied in the TOR.

From December 2005 to the actual bid on May 22 this year, 14 bid bulletins were issued and questions and requests for changes by other bidders were answered, Ng said.

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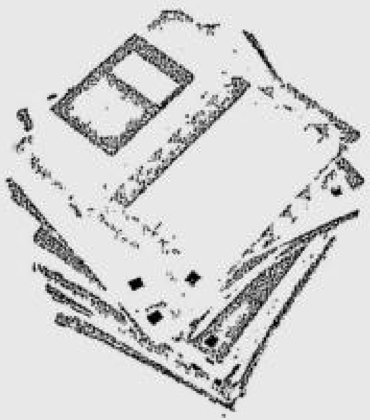

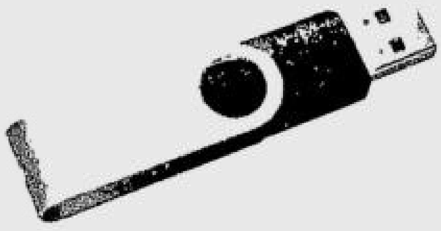

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Sexy servings at the malls /C3

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Getting to know Julia

JULIA Barreiro... inspired by a toy oven

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

THIS IS ALL ABOUT THE GLORY of the human spirit against all odds.

Julia Barreiro was born Nov. 7, 1984. At three months, her parents, Mau and Jun Barreiro, were told that Julia was severely-to-profoundly deaf on both ears. At two, she was enrolled at the Maria Lena Buhay, a school that had a program called oral-aural, where deaf children are taught to speak then later, attend a short program at the John Tracy Clinic in Los Angeles, California.

In 1993, Julia and her family, encouraged by Julia's improvement during the short stint at the John Tracy Clinic, moved to the US. Julia attended San Marino Elementary School and Brookhurst Jr. High School in California, public schools that offered oral programs for deaf children.

> The first hearing-impaired student to graduate from the Center for Culinary Arts dreams of opening a bakeshop here and perhaps even a small café in Paris

Unusual route

When Julia was 14, she and her parents moved back to the Philippines. She attended the Southeast Asian Institute for the Deaf. After completing high school, Julia would again take an unusual route.

Most of her high school classmates would go on to reputable schools with programs for deaf students. Julia wanted to be a chef. The Center for Culinary Arts never had deaf students before, but Julia's persistence reigned and CCA eventually not only accepted her, but also made adjustments to accommodate her sign language interpreter in order to assist her in learning. She recently graduated and was even asked to give an impromptu speech, which brought the house down with its sheer emotion.

Julia is a living example of one who was born with less but, with it, made the most. Let's get to know Julia:

What inspired you to be a pastry chef?

When I was 11 years old, my great-grandmother gave me a toy oven. I went home and my mom taught me how to use it. I started baking mini chocolate cakes using my toy oven. I made nice cakes.

What did you find to be the hardest to overcome?

The first two-day orientation program of CCA. I had to listen, watch the demo, write down notes and make products at the same time. It was very confusing. Before that, I did not have an interpreter, and I had to do all four at the same time.

I wanted to give up but Chef James talked to me and told me never to give up. My parents and my Ate Lyra, too, kept telling me, "Don't give up!"

Until Level 2 [I had] no interpreter. Nutrition and Business Marketing were hard and confusing. My dad and mom got me this recorder so I could record all my lessons. When I got home, mom and dad would listen to the tape and type. Sometimes it took six hours. I'd rest and then we would study until 3 a.m. I was always tired and wanted to give up. Mom and Dad were also tired listening to all my lesson tapes but they never told me that. So, I prayed to Mama Mary and my Lolo to make me strong.

What was the biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge was talking with my classmates and chef instructors.

At first, I was shy to talk to them because I knew they would not understand me and maybe they would leave me and just stop talking to me.

But I am happy that my classmates liked me. They always took care of me. They would stay after school and explain to me. Some classmates and some chefs even learned sign language so they could talk to me. Chef James always hugged me and told me that I was good.

And then my interpreters, Teacher Baby, Teacher May and Teacher Amy, always told me that everything would be okay. They were always there for me.

The biggest obstacle?

It is hard because people talk in Tagalog. I know maybe 10 words. People would talk and laugh and I wouldn't understand their jokes. I also wanted to know what was so funny.

What do you plan to do now that you have graduated?

I'd like to work first so I can learn about business. Then maybe open a small business with my classmates and my best friend, Mika. She is good in math and she will take care of that. I will just bake and bake. Then maybe open another business in the US with my Ate Lyra or in Europe. Maybe a small café in Paris!

Do you see yourself pursuing baking?

Yes. But I also see myself doing other things. I think I will succeed in other things, too, because my parents and sister always say that I should believe in myself.

I am thankful to those who have been good to me. Especially my dad, mom and Ate Lyra—they have sacrificed so much for me. Even the move to the USA was for me because they wanted me to go to a good school. I want to be like my Ate Lyra. She is good. I had difficult times but I had good teachers and friends at CCA. Mommy Carol, Liz, Caroline, Elaine, Myra, Jason, Eric, Mimi, Amy and Marivi were my friends. And God, He always takes care of me!

My parents and Ate Lyra always tell me I don't have to be rich to be successful. Success is when you are able to be yourself, trying your best and being happy.

To you, dear Julia, for the inspiration your person brings, thank you. God bless you, may His angels carry you to the path of your dreams, and may each of your dreams come true!

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

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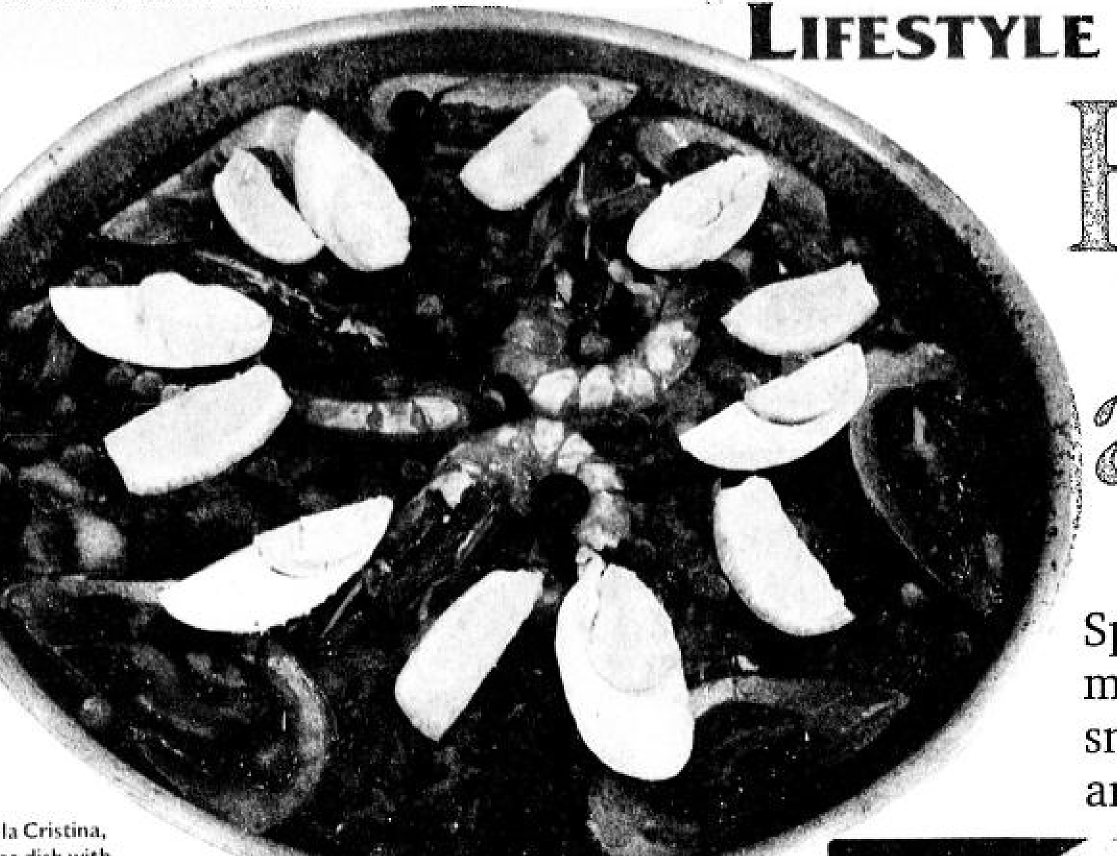
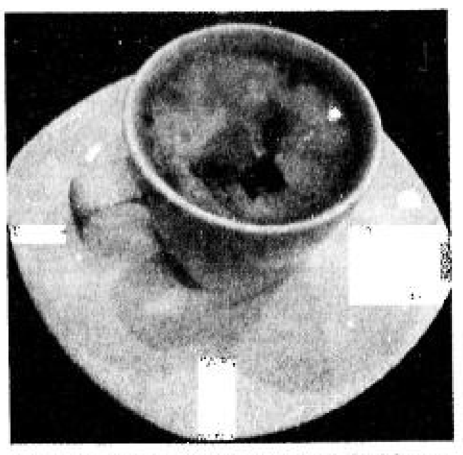


PAELLA à la Cristina, Spanish rice dish with seafood and meat

Food that is above par

Splendido offers more than just filling snacks for golfers and their families



SOPA Seca, dried garlic soup baked with egg yolk

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

CHEFS Ed Quimson and Heny Sison created Splendido's Spanish-Mediterranean-inspired menu.

KATRINA Ponce Enrile, president and CEO of Jaka Group of Companies that runs Splendido Golf and Country Club

AFTER A GOOD ROUND OF GOLF, what do golfers do? Eat, that's what.

Yes, eating usually follows after hitting golf balls and perfecting back swings on the greens. This is why, in most golf and country clubs, food is also given priority; menus are well thought-out, offering more than just hamburger and chicken sandwiches.

In fact, clubhouses are now trying to become gastronomic destinations not only for golfers but for their families as well.

The Spanish-Mediterranean-inspired clubhouse of the Splendido Taal Residential, Golf and Country Club in Tagaytay City is among those aiming to attract foodies and food-loving golf aficionados.

Tapping the expertise of chefs Ed Quimson and Heny Sison, the Splendido clubhouse in the 250-ha property owned by Jaka Tagaytay Holdings Corporation, offers a wide selection of fine-and-fun dishes in its two outlets, La Esquina Spanish Restaurant and Ladera Golfers Lounge.

Classy

Clubhouses are traditionally "fueling" stations for golfers. But La Esquina is not the sandwich-variety clubhouse. It is a fine-dining place, with traditional Spanish dishes like Tigres, fresh mussels stuffed with sautéed Spanish *chorizo*, *aligue* and shrimps topped with cheese and baked with a dash of paprika to give it that distinctive Spanish flavor.

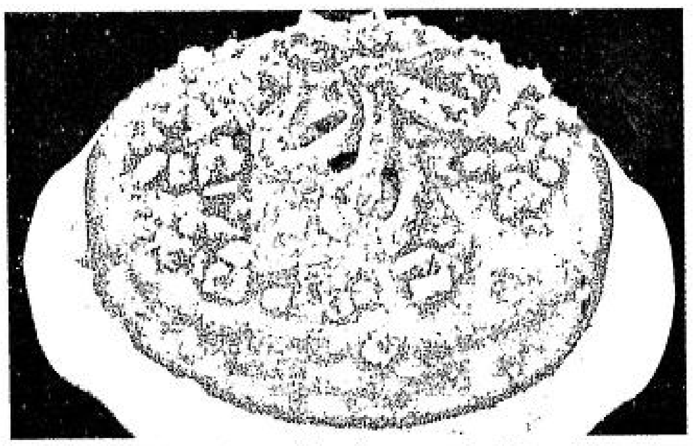
Batido de Sardinas is whipped cheese and sardines blended into a pâté and cleverly served on an upturned goblet with Melba toast.

Alcachofas Infanta Lenor, heart of artichokes sautéed in butter with garlic and Spanish *chorizo*, is innovative.

And what is a Spanish restaurant without paella? Quimson and Sison offer three varieties: Paella à la Christina, named after Jaka chair Cristina Ponce Enrile; Spicy Paella Negra made with squid and squid ink; and Paella de Mariscos or seafood paella.

"Paellas at La Esquina follow the traditional recipes from Valencia that require paella to be cooked slowly over low heat to produce a glutinous rice dish," says Quimson.

ENSALADA de Pecado Doña Cecile, fish, apple and pineapple salad



BISCOCHO de Tiaranja, traditional orange cake with candied orange peel

LADERA'S patio doors let the cool Tagaytay breeze waft through the dining area.

A perfect accompaniment to the paella is Pollo Iberico, white chicken roasted with caramelized garlic and potatoes.

At the cozy La Esquina, you may want to begin your meal with Lacon, cooked boiled leg of ham dusted with Spanish paprika, or Sopa Seca, dried garlic soup baked with egg yolk (served on demitasse).

To cap your meal, Sison has specially created desserts like Tocino de Cielo, a very rich egg yolk custard with caramel sauce; Biscocho de Naranja, traditional orange cake with candied orange peel; and Decadent Chocolate Cake, rich and moist flourless chocolate cake with butterscotch sauce.

Bobbit Ponce Enrile, president of the Ladera Culinary Services Inc. that manages the restaurant, says La Esquina is Spanish for "corner." The restaurant, which seats 60, got its name because it is located in one corner of the clubhouse, providing patrons a panoramic view of the golf course with its glass walls.

It is open for lunch and dinner only.

Golfer's lounge

Offering a more relaxed ambience, Ladera Golfer's Lounge has a more international menu to meet the varied tastes and preferences of golfers. Menu items include Tagaytay's signature dishes, like *bulalo*; and 15 different pizza flavors, including Chocolate, Chili Flakes and Philly Steak.

Among the fusion dishes are Peking Duck Mami and Chorizo Carbonara. Light snacks are Empanaditas with three kinds of fillings (*rellenong bangus*, chicken galantine and pork with tomatoes and raisin) and Migas con Chocolate (chocolate with chorizo and toasts), among others.

Ladera is Spanish for "hillside." The golfers lounge, situated on an elevated portion of the clubhouse, has a more casual atmosphere with its high wood ceilings and wrought-iron chandeliers. Its patio doors open wide to let the cool Tagaytay breeze into the dining area. A corner fireplace offers warmth on chilly evenings.

Guests can have their dessert and coffee al fresco in the adjoining veranda. The restaurant's dining area seats 90 while the veranda can hold 150 persons.

"For us, the golf course isn't the club's only source of pride," says Katrina Ponce Enrile, president and CEO of Jaka Group of Companies. The group is also proud of the food served to its guests.

The Splendido clubhouse was designed by leading architectural firm RR Payumo and Partners, in collaboration with Steven Leach and Associates for the interiors. Aside from the clubhouse, Splendido has par 72-track championship golf course designed by Greg Norman.

For more information, call general manager and golf director Mike Cedo at 0920-9380819 or marketing supervisor Jonnavic Rodriguez, 0918-9670800.

A 'kakanin' called 'binagol'

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

KAKANIN IS THE SUBJECT matter of this year's The Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award. It's the general name for native cakes and its root word is *kanin* or cooked rice.

But native cakes can also be made from fruit (*saba* banana), root crops or other grains like corn and millet.

The award committee hopes that with so many kinds of *kakanin* throughout the country, there will be varied entries about the many kinds of *puto, bibingka, suman, sapin-sapin*, etc.*

On a recent trip to Leyte, I had the chance to know more about one kind of *kakanin* we love to eat and which is a welcome *pasalubong*, awaited by friends and family.

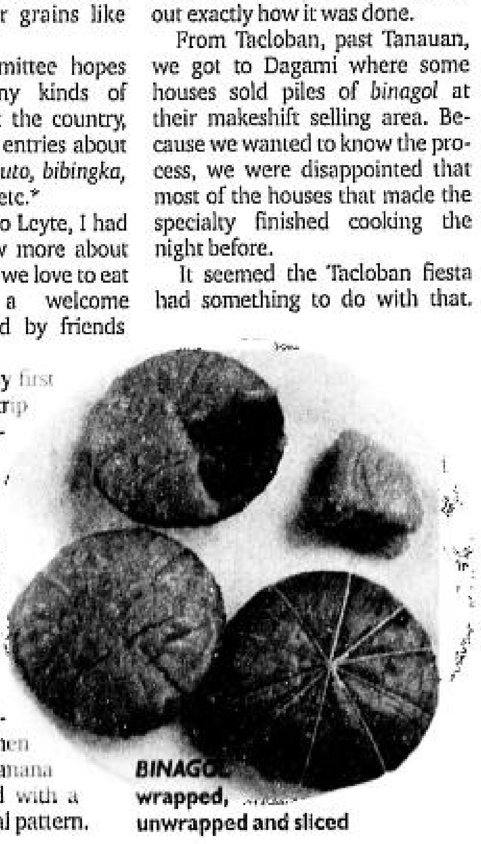
My agenda for my first day in Leyte was a trip to the town of Dagami. It's the place known for *binagol*, a specialty made from a kind of root crop, with a sweetened center mixed in with some peanuts, and placed in half a coconut shell, then wrapped in banana leaves and secured with a string tied in a radial pattern.

It's a treat awaited by many people who have tasted it, who find the very sweet center tempered by the comparatively bland surrounding mixture.

Its taste and what it looked like were all I knew of *binagol* and so I welcomed the opportunity to find out exactly how it was done.

From Tacloban, past Tanauan, we got to Dagami where some houses sold piles of *binagol* at their makeshift selling area. Because we wanted to know the process, we were disappointed that most of the houses that made the specialty finished cooking the night before.

It seemed the Tacloban fiesta had something to do with that.



BINAGO[illegible] **wrapped,** [illegible] **unwrapped and sliced**

They knew there would be so many orders for feasts and for *balikbayans*, all anxious to taste *binagol* once again.

We were pointed in the direction of one house where it was possible there was still some cooking going on. Same story. The cooking was almost done and the last batch was going through the final phase of boiling. Pieces from an earlier batch were drying on the table.

Basics of 'binagol'-making

The proprietors, Berting and Letty Pasagui, were willing to let their cooks tell us about the process. But they also said even if we were there at the start of the preparation and on to the cooking, the whole thing took about 10 hours to do. So, unless we were willing to wait for the next cooking, we would have to make do with the narrative.

Outside the house, stalks of *talyan*, the main ingredient, leaned on the walls. *Talyan* is a root crop that looks like a giant *gabi* (taro) plant. The couple's supply comes from Calbiga in Samar and costs P100 per piece.

According to the cooks, the *talyan* has to grow on a sloped area so the water does not remain in the soil and cause the root crop to rot. They also said harvesters could tell which *talyan* wasn't fit for cooking by partially cutting the stem and putting some of the sap to the arm. If the arm itched, they would bypass that plant.

The *talyan* is stripped first of its outer covering to reveal the pure white interior. This is pared until the surface looks the way it's supposed to, pristine white and smooth.

Next step is to run the *talyan* through a grating machine. The grated root crop is mixed with the rest of the ingredients (coconut milk, sugar).

For the sweetened part, *gabi*, sugar and the *latik* (coconut milk with sugar), plus some peanuts, are cooked together for an hour.

The assembly starts by lining a half coconut shell (*bagol*) with a cut banana leaf. Another town supplies the shell—halved, cleaned, smoothened.

The sweetened part is placed next then the *talyan* mixture, filling up all the spaces, with the top shaped into a small mound. A cut banana leaf covers the whole thing and everything is held together with a string.

Packed *binagol* are then placed in a deep pot filled with water then boiled. After the final cooking, the pieces are retrieved from the pot and brought out to dry.

The Pasaguis make 40 dozens every day but, when there is a fiesta somewhere, the number goes up to 100 dozens. A dozen costs P200. When we bought two dozens, Bert Pasagui jokingly said he expected me to buy more considering I was working for a newspaper. Local humor makes my work a lot more interesting.

Binagol is too rich for me and I can't finish one piece by myself. It's even richer when eaten just after it was cooked, as we did when our purchase was brought back to Tacloban. All the Warays at the table kept saying how different and how good just-cooked *binagol* was.

Shell-less version

There is a version of *binagol* that is not packed in a coconut shell. Hence, it doesn't deserve the name and so is known as *sagmani*. Another difference is that the sweetened part is distributed evenly throughout the entire *sagmani*, making it a more democratic *kakanin*.

COOKED ***binagol*** **drying**

DGF contest

*Submit your entries to DGF Food Writing Award c/o Prism, 5/F PDAF Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200. Deadline is Aug. 31. Use a pen name for your essay. With your entry, submit an information sheet with your real name, pen name, address, telephone, e-mail address.

Prizes include P10,000 for the winner, a glass trophy, books and subscriptions to culinary magazines. E-mail dgfawards@yahoo.com.ph or call 8952021.

Eating sexy

By Margaux Salcedo
Contributor

RACHEL and Barni Alejandro understand that for people on a diet, no regular menu will do.

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF LIVING in the city is that not every meal is necessarily healthy. Fast food was clearly not conceived for the health-conscious. And the South Beach diet is next to impossible to follow if you regularly take out your meals.

Enter The Sexy Chef. Picture yourself walking through the mall and finding a kiosk where the burritos are of whole-wheat tortilla and brown rice, the pasta is whole wheat, and the shakes use Splenda.

To the healthy eater, The Sexy Chef's menu is like whole-wheat manna from heaven!

The Sexy Chef is the fast-food stand of Gold's Gym that now welcomes not only Gold's Gym members but all healthy eaters as well. It is a sexy little kiosk that is run, literally, by a very sexy chef, Barni Alejandro.

The younger sister of singer Rachel Alejandro, Barni was a pre-school teacher who loved to cook and was informally Rachel's personal chef. She would whip up meals for friends and family and became known by word of mouth for her tasty, albeit very healthy, specialties.

Last year, Rachel decided it was time Barni dropped the teacher façade and focused on what she really loved: cooking. They started catering to people in the Quezon City area and, at the height of the South Beach diet frenzy, became known for delivering South Beach meals. The Sexy Chef was born.

New branch

Later, The Sexy Chef was invited to become the official food partner of Gold's Gym. Soon, they opened the first kiosk-cum-beverage bar in Robinson's Galleria. This week they opened their second stall just outside Gold's Gym at the 3/L, Gold's Gym, Glorietta.

The kiosk offers fast wraps, salads, pasta, shakes and even pastries, all using healthy, sugar-free, low-calorie, low-carb ingredients. For instance, all the wraps are made of whole-wheat tortilla, which Barni bakes herself to ensure its texture is not too stiff or too starchy.

She also uses low-fat cheese and brown rice for the various burritos that range from vegetarian to tuna to beef. There is even a Chicken Adobo burrito that uses brown rice and mango.

For the cakes and pastries, the selection is low-fat and sugar-free. I would recommend the brownies because, surprisingly, these are quite moist and don't taste like they are sugar-free at all.

The idea of offering the kiosk to the public, Barni says, was brought about by their own frustration. When she and her sister would tour the malls, they could never find anything quick yet healthy to eat.

Almost all food choices offer white starch and use too much oil. If you are serious about watching your weight or simply being over-all healthy, the best choice would be to not eat at all. So they created this food choice as an alternative for the mall-goer with a healthy lifestyle.

They deliver

Even better, if you are so busy you don't have time to go to the mall, The Sexy Chef will bring your meals to your doorstep! Yes, they deliver. They even take it a step further by whipping up meals according to your whims as well.

Barni, from her experience as Rachel's personal chef, understands that for people on a diet, no regular menu will do. So they have created a system where The Sexy Chef can be your personal chef. They have a set South Beach Diet Premiere Package for only P800 that includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, two snacks and dessert.

But when you call, you can tell them your diet specifications so The Sexy Chef can adjust to what works best for you. For example, if you don't eat pork, they look for alternatives. If you hate dairy, they can work around that, too. A file is made for each customer and the diets are very personalized.

Eating was never this sexy!

Call 9118881 or 0917-7992433, or drop by The Sexy Chef by Gold's Gym at Glorietta in Makati.

DINING OUT

CRUSTASIA Asian Crab and Seafood House features Pan- fried Catfish in Green Curry Sauce. Other bestsellers include Grouper Steamed in Superior Sauce, Three-layer Fish, Salt and Pepper Shrimps, Beancurd Hotpot, Chinese Ginger Broth, Sweet and Sour Fish and the Asian Deep-fried and Barbecue Specials. The restaurant launched recently the Asian Seafood Theater. Branches are at the G/L, Rockwell Power Plant Mall, Makati, and The Podium, 3/F, 18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center. Call 7285463 or 6313857.

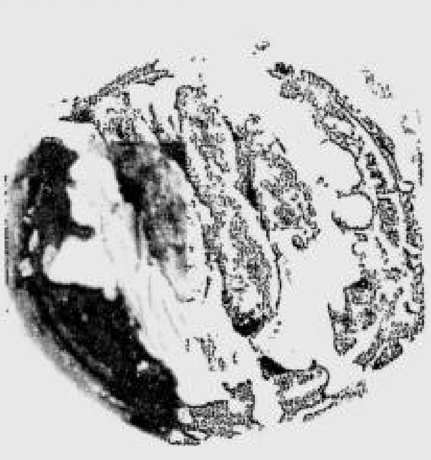
Grilled food festival

SAISAKI CELEBRATES THE traditional Japanese culinary art of Yakimono or grilling with its Robatayaki Festival. Try Kani Bacon Maki, crabstick rolled in bacon; Tori Chiisu Maki, cheese rolled in chicken fillet; Ika, squid; Ebi, prawn; Niku Aspa Maki, asparagus rolled in beef; as well as other Saisaki buffet dishes: *ebi* tempura, sukiyaki, steak, sushi, sashimi.

Price of Saisaki buffet (available in SM Megamall, Glorietta III, Alabang Town Center, Padre Faura, EDSA, and West Avenue) is P485 only, P385 on promo days. Call 5323004 or 5317292.

TRADERS Hotel Manila is holding Gourmet Moments from Penang until July 8 in cooperation with Malaysia Airlines and Tourism Malaysia. Festival features visiting chefs from Shangri-La's Golden Sands Resort in Penang, Malaysia. During the two-weeks-long festival, diners can win a round-trip ticket to Penang, courtesy of MAS and a two-night stay at Shangri-La's Golden Sands Resort.

FILOS Restaurant at the Fort Strip in Taguig City marks its anniversary July 8. The first 50 guests will get a 10-percent privilege card. Filos' bestsellers include Gambas, Adobo Sofrito Springroll, Crab Shrimp and Mango Salad, Bangus Belly stuffed with *pinakbet*.



HEAVEN 'N EGGS features Chika Chicken Barbecue and Choco Banana-nut Waffle. Heaven 'n Eggs branches are located at CKB Bldg. on Tomas Morato, Quezon City; Glorietta 4, Makati; Fuente Circle, Eastwood City; and Market! Market! at The Fort, Taguig.

Add color to your day—eat your veggies

By Linda B. Bolido

THE CONSUMER

SOMETHING GREEN, SOMETHING RED AND something citrus are not things a bride-to-be needs to have on her wedding day.

They are actually what many nutritionists recommend people should eat every day to guarantee a good mix of vitamins and minerals, according to Maxine Stinton on BBC Health online.

Strictly speaking, of course, though green is the predominant color of fruits and vegetables, pure red is not all that common, particularly in the Philippines, so perhaps you can take it to mean any other color aside from green and citrus.

July is Nutrition Month so, once more, with feeling, we remind people to eat their vegetables and fruits. And remember, potato chips and French fries are not vegetables, even if they are dyed red, green and citrus.

Stinton repeats what other nutritionists have been saying all along: "Fruits and vegetables are brimming with fiber, plus a whole range of vitamins and minerals and, because they're low in calories, they make an important and healthy addition to any diet." They have been found to help prevent many illnesses, including heart disease and some cancers.

Health authorities recommend eating at least five portions of fruits and vegetables every day—fresh, tinned, frozen, cooked, juiced or dried.

The question, of course, is, how much is a portion? Here are some guidelines:

- One piece of medium-sized fruit, e.g. an apple, peach, banana or orange
- One slice of large fruit, such as melon, mango or pineapple
- One handful of grapes or two handfuls of cherries or berry fruits
- One tablespoon of dried fruit
- A glass (roughly 100 ml) of fruit or vegetable juice
- A small tin (roughly 200 g) of fruit
- A side salad
- A serving (roughly 100 g) of vegetables, e.g. frozen or mushy peas, boiled carrots or stir-fried broccoli
- The vegetables served in a portion of vegetable curry, lasagna, stir-fry or casserole

Stinton says you can also add some excitement to your life by buying one new fruit or vegetable you've never tried before or didn't like as a child when you go shopping.

"Tastes change and by exploring new foods you'll be giving your taste buds a treat and doing your body a favor."

Feedback

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company has finally provided reader tebanjoy@yahoo.com of Taytay, Rizal, a landline, thanks to Horace Lavides, who is in charge of public affairs. The reader said they had been desperately waiting for their phone for two years.

Thanks, too, to Robert M. Agustin, vice president of the Government Service Insurance System, for solving a problem involving the mother of reader Corazon L. Lavin.

Meanwhile, both Bonifacio Security Services Inc. (BSSI) and the Bonifacio Estates Services Corp. (BESC), estate/property manager of BGCEA (Bonifacio Global City Estates Association), assure reader Paz Atienza they will look into her complaint about abusive traffic marshals inside The Fort and take appropriate action. Atienza said an encounter they had with some rude traffic marshals was too upsetting for her mother.

Reader Milagros Magtalas' complaint about not getting the reward item equivalent to the number of points she earned for using her BPI Express Credit Card has been resolved. BECC said the delay in delivery was simply the result of a slight error in the address given.

(Our regular columnist, Marietta V. Giron, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; PO Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph —Editor)

Wyeth Nutritionals' Bonakid advocates "Tibay" for the Filipino child

In a world filled with hardship and challenges, all parents wish to give their children a healthy, fighting chance at life. They want their children to be "matibay." The "tibay" or strength of a child, however, is not just measured by his physical health, but by his character as well. This inner strength springs from the values formed early in the child's life. Bonakid, the growing-up milk brand of Wyeth Nutritionals, shows full support for parents in nurturing kids to achieve the values of "tiyaga" (perseverance), "pagmamahal sa Diyos" (love for God), "galang" (respect), and "tiwala sa sarili" (confidence).

In line with this child development advocacy, Bonakid recently held a two-day affair dubbed "Tibay Tour" at the CSI Citimall in Dagupan, Pangasinan. During the event, parents and their children had the chance to experience fun and learning in various ways. Parents enjoyed short discussions and counseling conducted at the "Tibay Talk" area by Ma. Isabel Sison-Dionisio, professional marriage and parenting counselor, columnist and board member of Metro Working Mom, and co-author of the award-winning "Helping Our Children Do Well in School." Kids, on the other hand, had a grand time crafting and listening to animated stories. Active kids played at the "Tibay Ground" which featured a slide, monkey bars and a ball pool. There was also an area furnished with books, coloring materials, and other creative activities. There was "Kulay ng Tibay" that featured face painting and "Larawan ng Tibay", which urged kids to give their best strong pose in front of the camera. A Bonakid sampling booth was also available.

Bonakid of Wyeth Nutritionals, believes that "ang tunay na batang may tibay, hindi lang matibay ang katawan, kundi matibay din ang pagkatao." In partnership with parents, it will continue to advocate the values and provide proper nourishment to help give every Filipino child the "tibay" (strength) he needs to become a well-rounded individual. Dahil ang Bonakid, batang may tibay, batang may laban.

Entries now accepted for Doreen Fernandez writing contest

THE DOREEN GAMBOA FERNANDEZ FOOD Writing Award 2006 is now accepting entries.

The Manila Ladies Branch of the International Wine and Food Society (IWFS) said, the competition, now on its fifth year, would have for its theme Filipino native cake or *kakanin*.

Starting this year, the Filipino Heritage Festival Inc. is cosponsoring the award.

Participants in this year's competition must write an essay on native cakes that use rice and other grains, root crops and fruit.

The essay must be in English, 4,500-5,000 characters (about 800 words), printed on two pages of bond paper, double-spaced.

Participants must use a pen name. A separate envelope should have the author's information sheet with (1) name; (2) pen name; (3) residential address and telephone number; (4) business address and telephone number; and (5) cell-phone number.

Deadline for entries is Aug. 31. Send printed entry, with digital copy (in floppy disk or CD) and author's information sheet, to: Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award 2006, IWFS Manila Ladies Branch Awards Committee, Prism, 5/F, PDAF Bldg., Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City 1200.

Winners, to be announced in September, will get cash prizes from the Filipino Heritage Festival Inc.

E-mail dgfawards@yahoo.com.ph or call Girlie Canlas, tel. 8952021.

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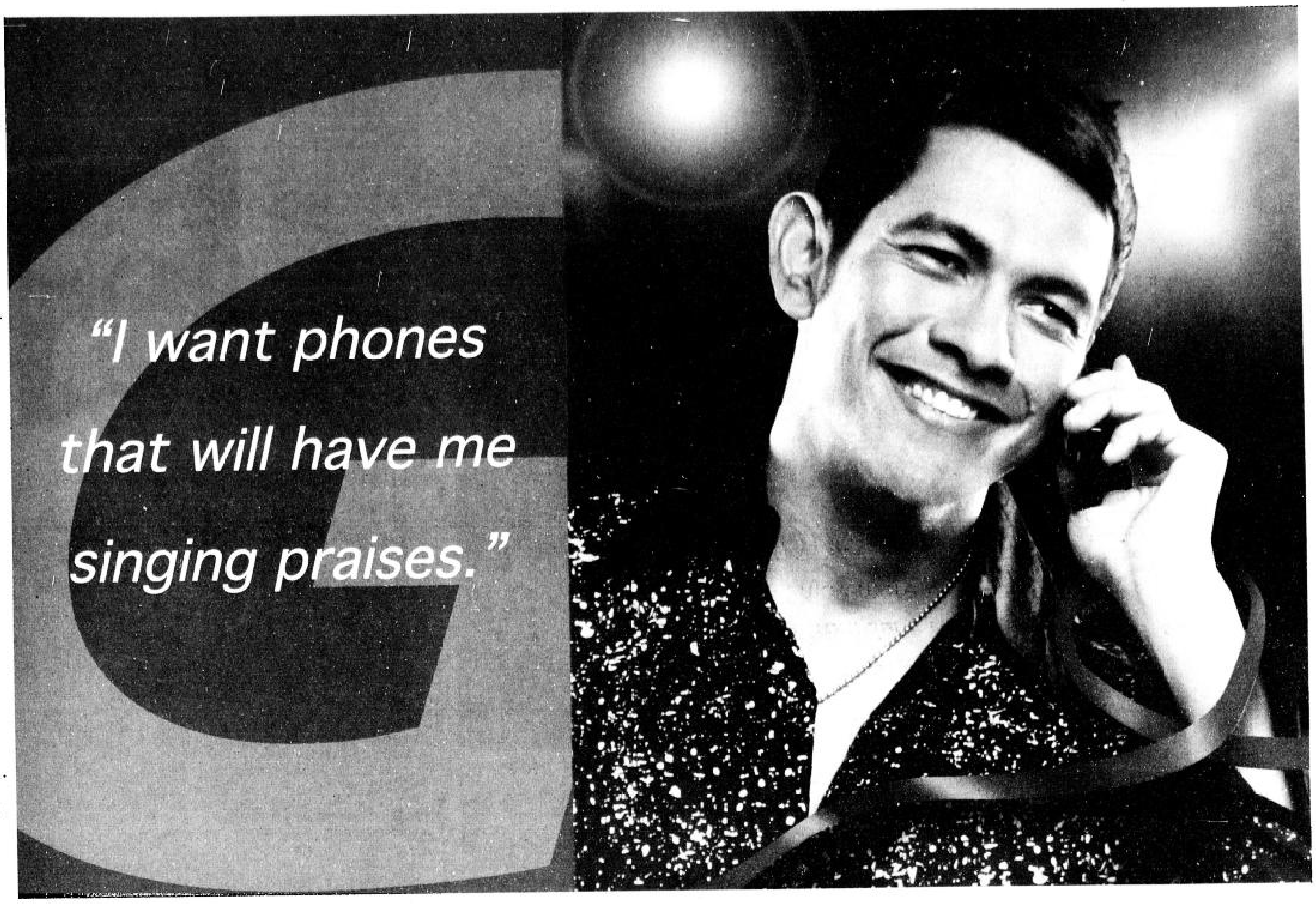

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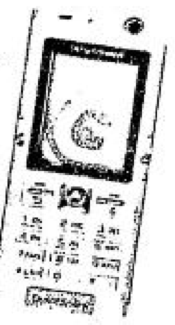

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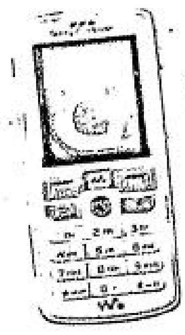

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